



A dizzying website

The Oliver twins on preserving history and heading to Evercade

Philip and Andrew Oliver like to keep busy. Despite being in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the developer duo have been doing plenty to keep themselves occupied, including setting up a new version of their website (olivertwins.com) and contributing a bunch of their *Dizzy* and NES games to a new Evercade collection. Here they tell us how both projects came about.

Why revamp your website?

Philip Oliver: Lockdown has us at home, and Andrew and I don't like being idle. For many years we've felt our website was really dated, but there was nothing we could do about it as it was hardcoded HTML from around 2008. We knew that one day we'd have to overhaul it and concluded that we'd have to do this ourselves. Thankfully, website editors have come a long way in the last ten years. It's a little more complicated than using PowerPoint, but not much, and there's no coding involved!

What have you changed?

Andrew Oliver: The concept of the site is fairly similar in that it had a brief overview of our early careers from playing games as kids and then learning how to make them, all the way through to making many best-sellers and setting up a games studio. The new website has taken that to a whole new level. We've got screenshots, reviews, adverts from the time and the longplay videos on each format, and most are even playable in the browser (sadly not on mobile). You can now see how the games and technology differed and improved over time. We think it's a great way for people to learn about the early days of the industry.

Why do you think classic games should be documented?

PO: We were lucky to enter the industry in its infancy. We had many ups and downs, and our careers are a good example of what those days were like for early game developers. We are fortunate that, being kleptomaniacs, we have a lot kept from those days so we are in a great position to act as spokespeople for the early days of the UK games industry, and, of course, we are proud of the games we made – some more than others, obviously!

How did the new Evercade compilation come about?

AO: Robert Peacock of PixelHeart, (a leading retro game publisher and distributor) contacted us in March. He said he was working closely with Blaze, and said they'd really like a *Dizzy* collection – as it's been requested on social media. I explained that we have made many other great games and some of those should be on the cartridge, too – games like *Super Robin Hood*, *FireHawk* and *DreamWorld Pogie*.

Why include the NES *Dizzy* games?

PO: Since the *Fusion* Kickstarter campaigns, we now have 11 great NES games, all of which have had very limited exposure due to the politics that surround them. The NES games have an elegance and art about them that is appreciated by retro game enthusiasts. It was hard to get these games to look and feel as great as they do given the limited technology and memory constraints.

Is it nice your unreleased games will reach a bigger audience...

AO: We made games to be played and enjoyed by as many people as



» The Oliverts never throw anything away and now you'll find all their adverts and press clippings documented forever.



» Considering the sheer popularity of *Dizzy*, it's unsurprising to find a whole section of the website dedicated to the franchise.



» It's great that all profits of the new Oliver twins collection is going to charity. More of this please, Blaze.



» Philip Oliver (left) tells us, "We feel our story can inspire and educate the next generation of game developers."



possible. Money usually followed that enabled us to make more and better games, but sadly that never happened with these NES games.

The charity proceeds are a nice touch, did you get to decide what organisation to support?

PO: Yes, the profits all go to charity, in line with an ongoing agreement

we have with Codemasters with whom we share the IP rights. We chose to give the money to the National Videogame Museum as we are patrons and could see how badly they'd been hit by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Why do you think the Evercade is gaining so much momentum with retro gamers?

AO: There have been many ways over the years to play classic retro games, but they were usually bootlegged and clunky. Retro fans are nostalgic and want to do right by those original game developers. Evercade offers an official way to conveniently play these games, either portably or on a big TV, with hardware buttons that feel close to the original experience. ✨



» [NES] The new Evercade collection will give you access to games like *Wonderland Dizzy*, which have had a very limited release.

