

Activision Atari 2600 Action Pack 2 (For Windows / Windows 95) from Activision

Do you still have your old Atari 2600 system hooked up to your television? If so, then you may want to retire your old system for good. Why? Because Activision has brought 15 more addicting titles to your PC (via Windows) in their Atari Action Pack 2. This compilation of Atari games published by Activision include: Atlantis, Barnstorming, Dolphin, Dragster, Enduro, Ice Hockey, Keystone Kapers, Laser Blast, Megamania, Oink!, Plaque Attack, River Raid 2, Skiing, Stampede, and Tennis.

Activision has released two versions of their Atari Action Pack 2. One is for Windows 3.1 and the other is for Windows 95. The first question one may ask is, "So... is the software the same? Is Activision trying to pull a fast one?" Definitely not.

The Windows 3.1 version of the software says, "If you are using Windows for Workgroups (networked), Windows NT or Windows 95, Action Pack 2 may function, however they are not supported and you may experience system failures." A text file that comes with the software puts it more bluntly, "If you are a Windows 95 user... this version of Atari 2600 Action Pack 2 is... not compatible with Windows 95."

Being adventurous, I decided to try running the Windows 3.1 version of the software under Windows 95 anyway. The games ran fine--for a while. After a bit, however, the screen would flash to black for an instant, and I knew my system was unstable. On my machine, the screen saver would activate. I would then move the mouse or press a key to turn it off, but every time Windows 95 came back up, the screen saver kicked back in. Now, I have no idea what would happen on your machine, but Activision wasn't kidding about not running Atari 2600 Action Pack 2 for Win 3.1 on Windows 95. So don't do it! :^)

Don't worry if you accidentally purchased the Win 3.1 version when you are running Windows 95 on your computer. You can either return the game to the store you purchased it from and exchange it for the Windows 95 version or you can contact Activision and "upgrade" to the Win95 version for a nominal fee.

Are there any differences between the two? Of course! The version for Windows 3.1 must install 10 megs of files to your hard drive. It must create a program group for all the game's icons. It installs all the drivers needed for Windows 3.1.

The version for Windows 95 (in my opinion) is better. It only uses 1 megabyte of your hard drive. When you place the CD in the CD-ROM drive, Windows 95's autoplay feature kicks in. You don't have to click any buttons, or search for any files--you place the CD in the drive and a shell for all 15 games starts up. You click on the game you want to play, and the game fires up. When you're done, you close the game and the menu re-appears. Slick!

The games themselves are true clones of the original games. That means that nothing (in the way of gameplay) has changed. Some games may leave you wondering, "How could I have spent so much time playing such a simple game?" But you have to remember that these games were state of the art when they were introduced. Some of the graphics have been touched up a little. Not in the way of toning down the size of the pixels, but in the number of colors.

Activision has implemented a few cool features into the Action Pack 2. One of them is Mom. Do you remember the various phrases that your mother would shout at you while you blasted pixellated aliens to smithereens? They're all here! From, "You're going to ruin your eyes!" to, "Don't you have homework to do?" to, "Go outside and play for a while!" You can change the amount of nagging that Mom does from constantly (about every 10 to 30 seconds) to rarely.

Another cool feature is a quick history of each game. It describes the ideas that were behind each game and the technical difficulties that may have been encountered.

So is the Atari 2600 Action Pack 2 worth it? Well, if you purchased the first pack, then you'll probably like this pack also. They may be simplistic games today, but they'll definitely bring back fond memories--and you'll probably waste many more hours than you care to admit playing them again!

Rating

Graphics: 90
Sound: 88
Interface: 90
Fun Factor: 88

Overall: 89

OPTIONAL:**System Requirements**

Win 3.1
486/33
4MB Ram
CD-Rom
10MB Hard Disk

SVGA
mouse
Soundblaster or compatible
Joystick

Win 95
486/33
8MB Ram
CD-Rom
1MB Hard Disk
SVGA
mouse
Windows 95 compatible sound card
Joystick or GamePad