

# InfoWorld Software Review

## Car Wars, a car-racing game for the TI-99/4

By Lawrence R. De Rusha, Jr.

If you enjoy arcade-style games then Car Wars, a Solid State Software module from Texas Instruments, should be a welcome addition to your game library.

**FEATURES:** The game display shows a playing area consisting of a race track with five car-lanes, each of which has a row of black dots down the center. To the left is a light tree similar to the type used for starting drag-races (i.e., red, yellow and green lights set vertically).

The score is displayed above the light tree. The high-game score for the series is flashed between games in this corner.

You determine the skill level of the game by exercising two options. The first option determines the speed of both your race car and the computer race car. Your choices are: creepin', fast or flyin'.

The second set of options affects only the computer car. Your choice determines at which point the computer car will double its speed. The

first selection, Late, speeds the car up after 150 dots have been cleared by your car. Choosing Early increases the car speed after 120 dots have been cleared. The last selection, Look Out, accelerates the car after only 90 dots.

After you've made your choices, two race cars appear at the bottom of the playing area in the outside lane. You control the red car; the yellow car is controlled by the computer. Each car is headed in the opposite direction from the other.

The computer tells you, PRESS ANY

KEY TO BEGIN. When the lights turn green, the word GO flashes and the game begins.

You control your car through the keyboard or the wired remote controllers. If you're using the keyboard, the arrow keys (E,S,D,X) are used for changing lanes, and the Enter or the Y key accelerates the car.

The object of the game is to clear all the dots from the lanes without crashing into the computer car. You're allowed three chances in each game. The number of remaining attempts is

# DATA BANK ■ DATA MANAGEMENT FOR AMATEURS



Even "Drac" has trouble convincing people he's an amateur when they see the results he gets with DataBank!

DataBank software enables CP/M\* system users to create their own customized information management and records processing systems...even with no prior computer experience!

If you're selling the Xerox 820, Apple with Softcard, Altos, SuperBrain, IMS, Dynabyte, Toshiba, Vector Graphic, or other CP/M system, DataBank can put life in the system right before your customers' eyes. Databank systems become friendly office machines that anyone can use and understand. There's no cryptic "computerese" to learn...DataBank speaks plain language. And that turns demos into sales.

Ease of use doesn't limit DataBank's power or performance. It has all the functions you'll need in one unified software system: on-line file maintenance and processing, multi-key assembler sorting, 10 levels of selection, reports with arithmetic, query, letter merge, "multi-up" labels, formatted disk file output, and utilities to define files, screen formats, menus and reports.

Letter merges can be a pain in the neck. But with DataBank it's easy, and you have a choice: let DataBank read and merge the document, or output a formatted file to disk to use with Wordstar/Mailmerge, Magic Wand, Select and others.\*

Tight on disk space? There's no need to reserve work areas with DataBank. High speed sorts are done in place to optimize storage. Files can span disks too. All available space on up to four drives can be used for a single DataBank file. That can mean over 10,000 names per MegaByte on a mailing list!

Want to get into customization? DataBank includes a powerful, well documented Subroutine Library for requirements not accommodated by the standard programs. Using the library, even an amateur BASIC grammar can look like a pro in no time.

Documentation? The best...rated excellent by InfoWorld. Over 100 well written pages make it easy for your customers to put DataBank to work. Several sample configurations are included with DataBank, too.

Price? Competitive. DataBank is \$350 retail, with a dealer plan that gives you the margins and support you need to be profitable. Delivery is off the shelf...call us or your software distributor for DataBank, the data management system for amateurs.

**DATAACCESS**  
CORPORATION  
4221 Ponce De Leon Boulevard  
Coral Gables, Florida 33146  
(305) 446-0669

\*CP/M, Wordstar/Mailmerge, Magic Wand, and Select are trademarks of Digital Research, MicroPro Int'l, Peachtree Software and Select Info Systems, respectively.

## InfoWorld Software Report Card

### Car Wars

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Error Handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### System Requirements

- TI-99/4 computer

Price: \$39.95

Texas Instruments Co.  
P.O. Box 53  
Lubbock, TX 79408

marked by small racing cars in the center of the screen.

You score ten points for each dot you clear from the field during the first round. Each additional round adds 10 points to the original dot value. Once you have cleared the entire area of dots, you can get bonus points. Bonus points are based on the speed that you selected in the beginning of the game. The faster the cars, the more points you get.

The second round begins with the yellow computer car in a new position on the outside-lane. If you succeed in

## NEW East Coast Dealer CompuPro™

We also feature a full line of integrated S-100 systems for single and multi-user applications.



**MICRO SYSTEMS, INC.**  
978 Tiogue Avenue  
Coventry, RI 02816  
(401) 828-7270

CompuPro is a trademark of Godbout Electronics.  
VISA and MasterCard accepted.

clearing the field of dots again, then the third round begins with two computer cars. After every successful two rounds, the computer gains one car. For example, in the sixth round the computer would have three cars to your one.

**PERFORMANCE:** Car Wars is challenging because of the number of op-

tions and the increasing skill level required to continue. When there are more than two cars controlled by the computer, you must become a master of reflexes.

This arcade-style game will appeal to players who are skilled in quick reflex timing and hand-eye coordination. On the other hand, it may not appeal to the person who likes the win/lose type of game.

The program worked without error. Even after I dropped the module several times (which is not recommended) the program ran fine.

**EASE OF USE AND ERROR HANDLING:** Input errors are simply ignored by the TI-99/4 system. The computer only recognizes inputs from

the proper keys.

This program requires no knowledge of the computer beyond turning it on and plugging in the module. There are no disks or cassettes to handle.

Power failures are frustrating to encounter since there is no crash recovery. Blackouts are simply frustrating—all the game-in-progress information is hopelessly gone.

**DOCUMENTATION:** The documentation for Car Wars is easy to understand and to follow. Inside the front cover is a quick-reference chart that explains the various key functions. Since there is no index, a table of contents would have been helpful but was not provided.

The manual is short and to the point. It tells you how to install the module into the console, how to play the game and how scoring works. Also included is a brief description on caring for the module, what to do in case of trouble and a section covering the warranty information.

**SUMMARY:** Car Wars is a challenging game testing reflexes, timing, nimble fingers and sharp eyes. It is enjoyable, somewhat addictive and arrogant with its no-win/high-score manners.

The game has lasting entertainment value because of the number of options and the increasing skill levels that are possible.

The graphics are excellent. ■

## Information overload

One observer of the videotex scene thinks consumers may already be overloaded by information they get from mass media. W. David Godfrey of Victoria University in Toronto, Canada, asks:

"Have we reached the saturation point in terms of hours per day spent by the average consumer with media of one form, or another and, if so, will the mass market decay as information sources multiply?"

"We are indeed probably fairly close to media-saturation in our society. Telidon will enter and compete with other media; it cannot be incremental, because we need time to eat, sleep, work, exercise and attend conferences. When combined with the influences of video disks, home disk-satellite antennae, computer-assisted learning, fiber optics and home computers, Telidon will help contribute to a slow but certain decay of the mass market.

"The ease of entry, the pleasures of information production, the forces of a free market, the diversity of interest groups and the growth of information networks of every size and hue will make common-denominator programming more and more difficult," according to Godfrey.

## IBM Personal Computer?

Information-rich new magazine helps you pick the right system, then get the most out of it



The Independent Guide to IBM Personal Computers

Hundreds of colorful pages packed with news of add-on products, software programs, services, and how people are already using their IBM "PC's".

Subscribe to *PC Guide*™ and save up to 25% off cover price. Six issues for only \$14.50 or 12 issues for \$27.\* Mail check with name, address and ZIP to:

**PC Guide, 1528 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122. Phone credit card numbers to 415/753/8092.**

\* Money-back guarantee. If not satisfied, return mailing label in ten days for full refund.

# CP/M + COMMODORE!

## RUN CP/M® PROGRAMS ON YOUR COMMODORE PET/CBM

Add SOFTBOX. The Z80-based computer which connects to your Commodore PET or CBM through the IEEE bus.

Now you have the ability to run any CP/M software or application, giving you a universe of computing capabilities you could only wish for until now.

Simply by plugging the SMALL SYSTEMS SOFTBOX into your Commodore Computer's IEEE-488 port and loading the CP/M disk, your computer will run under the world's most popular disk operating system. No internal connections or modifications to your computer are necessary.

Applications packages designed to work with specific terminals (like Lear Siegler ADM3A, Televideo 912 or Hazeltine 1500) need no modification to work with your computer's screen, since the SOFTBOX allows your computer to emulate any of these devices.

### PERIPHERAL INTERFACES INCLUDED

Interfaces that come with your SOFTBOX let you add Corvus hard disk, with capabilities to 80 MBytes of storage. You can run a printer, and even to talk to another CP/M based system.

Available for immediate shipment. 90-day Warranty. Suggested retail only \$895

Call or write for our free CP/M Software Catalog.

# SSE

Small Systems Engineering, Inc.

71 Park Lane, Brisbane, California 94005  
415/468-2900 TWX 910-372-6109

### SPECIFICATIONS

- CP/M Version 2.2
- Z80 CPU running at 4 MHz with no wait states.
- 64K RAM
- Operates with any 2000, 3000, and 8000 series PET/CBM
- Supports up to 8 Commodore disk drives in any mix of 3040, 4040 or 8050.
- Diskette containing operating system with utilities and full documentation included.
- RS232 serial interface with software definable baud rates for use with a terminal or printer.
- Menu driven system configuration.
- Corvus hard disk interface (5-, 10-, or 20 MByte)

## COMMODORE DEALERS

Expand your customer base by including the vast range of CP/M software development and applications!

Small Systems Engineering provides everything you need to enter the CP/M marketplace. Excellent dealer margins. Advertising and marketing support. CP/M software on Commodore formats. Corvus products. Watch for innovative products from SSE to support your Commodore Computer line.

CP/M is a registered trademark of Digital Research.  
© 1982 Small Systems Engineering, Inc.