

# MG Interview: Callisto Corporation

by Douglas Kiang

Callisto Corporation is an up and coming Macintosh software developer whose previous titles include Super Mines, Super Maze Wars (which won IMG's Network Game of the Year), and Spin Doctor. The principals of the company, Mike Barta, Robert Harris, and Seth Lipkin were nice enough to grant IMG an interview

IMG: What's your take on the Mac market? Have you been satisfied with your sales so far?

Callisto: We think that the games market is growing for the Mac and we believe that our sales so far have been good. We also think that as Spin Doctor, Super Maze Wars and Super Mines become better known that our sales will continue to grow.

IMG: What is your most popular title? (Either sales- or satisfaction-wise) Why do you think it has been so popular?

Callisto: Super Maze Wars has been our most popular title. It is a really fun single player shoot'em-up as well as a great network game over AppleTalk. The 3D-graphics in Super Maze Wars are extremely smooth. Spin Doctor closely rivals Super Maze Wars in popularity. People are welcoming this novel concept in gaming.

IMG: What are you planning next?

Callisto:

MG: Will Callisto ever do any sequels of its popular titles? (Super Spin Doctor Supreme?)

Callisto: There are still some very good games on the PC that are not on the Mac (such as X-Wing). We are looking into developing products in this area. We need feedback from the gaming community about the kinds of games that are desired (send mail to [callisto1@aol.com](mailto:callisto1@aol.com)). Sequels are a possibility, especially Spin Doctor II, but we are still recovering from MacWorld Expo.

IMG: What led you to come up with the "Spin Doctor" theme?

Callisto: Darrell Myers, the creator and artist for Spin Doctor, has had this project back of his mind for many years. I think that the story had something to do with him watching the motion of his windshield wipers on his car on day. Darrell is very fond of games with the simplest of concepts, most notably Tetris.

IMG: What is your feeling on copy protection? Is it simply a punishment for the legitimate user, or is it really effective in deterring piracy?

Callisto: Our products don't currently have copy protection as a convenience to our customers. However, piracy in the industry is a serious problem. We believe that piracy is having a significant effect on our company's ability to continue to be a Macintosh game developer. There is a feeling among many Mac users that game software can be freely copied and past around. Our view is that attitude has two major negative impacts on the game business. First, it discourages companies from developing Mac games, and second, it impacts the ability of current Mac game developers to be able to fund the development of new Mac game titles.

IMG: There's been recent talk of having a rating system for all computer games. What are your feelings on a rating system?

Callisto:

MG: Will Callisto continue to produce Macintosh games exclusively, or will you be going to other platforms (Sega, SNES, MS-DOS, Newton)

Callisto: Our preference is to develop new and original games on the Mac. Some of our titles will probably be ported to other platforms. But, we are firmly committed to developing Mac titles first.

IMG: Did you name your company after Jupiter's moon or the nymph that was changed into a bear by Hera? (my girlfriend's question)

Callisto: Callisto is the 4th moon of Jupiter. That is where we got the name.

IMG: Many have criticized Apple Computer's lack of encouragement of game developers. What has been your experience with Apple? What changes do you see on the horizon?

Callisto: Our relationship with Apple has been very good. We aren't exactly sure what game developers are looking for from Apple. Of course, it would be nice to have more hardware support for games, but this is probably not going to happen.

IMG: What are your favorite Macintosh games?

Callisto: You probably don't want me to name one of my own games, but Spin Doctor is still one of my favorites, even after tons of time testing all of those levels. MYST is an excellent graphical adventure game. Hellcats is another one of my favorites.

IMG: How did you get started as Macintosh programmers?

Callisto: Actually, we started out as Atari game programmers. Then Atari went away, and the Mac appeared about the same time. The rest is history. Wow, I just realized that I have been programming the Mac for 10 years. How time flies when your having fun.

IMG: Any last words to our readers?

Callisto:

