

-

y Jamie McCornack

I've been told Skittles was in Inside Mac Games already, once. I was promised a copy of the issue, I believe, but never received it. I would like it if you could forward me this issue, as well as the current one you're writing.

Q: What does a user get when they mail you the money? I've just dabbled with the game, and haven't seen any place/time where the user is asked for a registration number (I have read the Read Me, so I do understand that registration unlocks advanced levels and high scores...I just don't know when and how.

A: The demo game is only 3 levels long. The full game is eight levels long, and the computer AI is MUCH, MUCH more intelligent on levels four through eight. (The first three levels were designed to let newbies enjoy the game--the last five were designed for challenge!) New levels means new characters, new music and new surprises.

Also, high scores are disabled until a user registers. Since many of the original requests from version 1.0 were to add high scores, I did so but decided that registration would be necessary to access them.

Q: Do you use a variety of registration numbers? Are they partially in sequence, and partially generated by manipulating that "seed" part of the registration number through various mathematical processes?

A: There is no "registration number." The demo copy is simply missing lots of resources. The missing resources encompass all the higher skill level data--enemy graphics, intelligence levels, and music resources. The full copy takes a little more disk space.

Q: How's registration going?

A: Well, I've passed the fifty mark. I'm probably at around seventy-odd

registrations, but I haven't counted yet. (I keep tabs every month on my profits, mostly for tax reasons.)

Q: How are people reacting to the price?

A:At first, a few people balked, but most of them were quite obviously kids that had little intention of registering anyway. Most people think it's fair. Considering the work I put into Skittles (about 18 months), I think it's QUITE fair.

Q: How did you pick \$20?

A:When I began doing shareware, I started off with basic games that cost \$5. My more difficult projects, I charged \$10 for. Later on, I tried different registration methods, including scalable registration (i.e., pay more and you get more in return). However, Skittles was by far my biggest (and most polished) accomplishment, so I feel it's well worth \$20. Coincidentally, most games in the store go for about double that. So I still think it's a good deal for users.

Q: In retrospect (if you knew then what you know now), would you have chosen a different price point?

A:No. I'm happy with my returns. And users are comfortable with it as well.

Q: How significant is your shareware earnings to your life? Like, do you have a real job? Is the shareware gravy, or is it essential to your survival?

A: Well, I'm 18 and just entering college. It's my main source of income, but I could live without it. It's really nice to have pocket change though.

Q: Any points you'd rather not see in an IMG column, just say, "This is off the record," and I'll honor your confidences, if you'd care to tell me to satisfy my own curiosity.

A: Nah, I didn't say anything too horrible, did I? ;)

Q: BTW, this is the coolest of the Tetris-like games I've seen (including Tetris), and I'll sure be mentioning that when I write this piece.

A: Hey, thanks!

How many authors are you interviewing for this article, anyway? And are you focusing on one genre of shareware, or are you covering the gamut?

Anyway...to some of your questions...

I started out on the original Yipe in Febuary of this year.. and after I finished it, I thought it was the best game ever produced...now I look back and laugh at myself. I started Yipe II in April and I think it's come a long way since the first one...but I feel I still have a ways to go.

I've been interested in programming Mac games for probably 4-5 years now, but not until I read your book was I able to write something decent. I had started off

awhile back with a book called 'Macintosh C Programming Primer'. It helped me get started with all the basic stuff, dialogs, windows, events, etc...but I didn't really know where to go from there. I'm a CIS major at Chico State...but I tend to do more programming for myself than for school...argh.

Registrations are going great for Yipe! II. I've had at least 12-15 people email me in the first 5 days since it's been on AOL telling me that the registration fee is in the mail. I'm actually pretty suprised.

More than anything...I definitely want suggestions for Yipe! III. I'd feel pretty honored getting them from the man who helped make this game possible in the first place.