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NEXT GENERATION

The **future** of **interactive** entertainment

Premiere issue



The looming videogame wars of 1995

volume one

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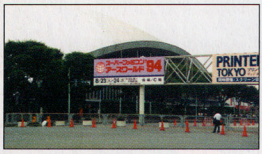
Virtua Fighter 2: state of the art in arcade action and Sega Japan's flagship title, due for US release in early 1995. Sega's AM2 board delivers 300,000 texture-mapped polygons, 60 frames per second. See page 63

VR32: a clearer picture emerges

Nintendo's 32bit 'Virtual Boy' is scheduled for worldwide shipout in April next year

Since its announcement in April, Nintendo's 32bit VR32 system has been the subject of much speculation, conjecture and general misunderstanding. Nintendo plans to dispel all preconceptions when it unveils the hardware at the Shoshinkai show in Tokyo on November 15, a full six months before it is expected to go on sale.



The Harumi International Trade Center is where the VR32 will make its debut

Pin-sharp details are still elusive, but it is now believed that the VR32 'Virtual Boy' will be a portable, battery-operated unit which accepts cartridges and will either be attached by a lead to a visor headset (see below), or come as a lap-held integrated unit. The display will be based on an oscillating mirror-generated stereoscopic projection technology developed by an Reflection Technology Inc. It's possible that it consists of a monochrome display which can be projected up to three feet in front of the player as a stereographic image.

Before news of Nintendo's deal with Reflection Technology was announced, pundits had previously believed that Nintendo has tied the knot with one of two alternative players in the VR industry.

The first was Virtual IO, manufacturer of fully engineered HMDs that uses 'non-immersive' technology — that is, it's possible to see around and through the HMD, which reduces the dangers of tripping over the dog, falling in the bath, etc. But a conflict of interest (Virtual IO is developing an HMD for TCI's Sega Channel) presumably stood in the way.

The second company, a Redmond-based (think about it) outfit called RPI, was known to hold some important VR patents. The technology had never been seen in public, however, and the company was known to have been involved in serious negotiations with another major hardware manufacturer.

Whether 'Virtual Boy' will feature a HMD is still the major undisclosed issue. Many pundits believe Nintendo will shy away from a HMD for fear of potentially massive health risks (anyone remember Steve Martin in *The Jerk*?), but the financial incentives for producing the world's first half-decent VR setup may be simply too great to ignore.

The alternative, viewed-from-a-distance lap-held integrated unit seems a lot more likely.

Expect the full **NEXT Generation** report next month... ng



Deep in its Kyoto HQ, Nintendo is working on what could be its next big success





Japanese magazine *The Super Famicom* recently printed this artist's impression of a HMD-based VR32. How much resemblance this bears to the *real* VR32 is still unknown