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Celebrating quality art + tools,
released for free by their creators.

FREEWARE CREATOR MAGAZINE

MAY 2024

Ghosts I-IV - Nine Inch Nails
Pretty Mapp - Rieke / de Oliveira Rosa Prates
THEFT: A History of Music - Aoki, Boyle, Jenkins, Akin, Garvey & Smith
Vantage Master Online - Falcom
Kung Fury - David Sandberg
GB Studio - Chris Maltby
In Rainbows - Radiohead

_data

_creator: Nine Inch Nails
_released: 2008
_type: Album Collection
_genre: Instrumental
_license: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0
_download: Available

Ghosts I-IV
Nine Inch Nails

A landmark in Reznor and Ross' discography - fans of NIN's film soundtracks will find a world of textures to dive into for days

Don't make the mistake of mentally categorizing this as straight ambient too early on. Within the first three tracks, you quickly realize that *Ghosts I-IV* covers a much more diverse ground than many other mid-career experiment albums by other artists.

The atmospheric palette is accompanied by a PDF booklet of equally mesmerizing photos of the studio and scenery - all bundled and released under the Creative Commons BY-NC-SA license. This means you are free to download, remix, and re-share non-commercially, given you credit NIN and share any reworks under the same license. If you ever doubt the popularity of such a project, know that the resulting traffic initially crashed the NIN official web servers.

Links:
[Official Site]
[Free Download]

_data

_creators: Rieke / de Oliveira Rosa Prates
_released: 2021 -
_type: Stylized Map Design
_license: MIT
_source: Open Source

Pretty Mapp

Rieke / de Oliveira Rosa Prates

Generate stylized printcards, coasters, or posters of your favourite locations for your (next) wedding or wall-hanging

Christoph Rieke (and contributor's) implementation of Marcelo de Oliveira Rosa Prates' *PrettyMapp* takes a street address as input. Then pulling from the OpenStreetMap initiative, generates a beautiful bird's-eye streetmap in one of four stylized flavours.

You can go further by expanding out the "Customize map style" tab and change everything from the hand-scribble-style text to the layer colours and thickness of the lines.

Refreshingly for 2024, it seems to rely not on generative AI, but on hand-crafted Python to generate the images - which can then be right-clicked and downloaded for a use of your choice.

Links:
[Online Version]
[Source Code]

_data

_creators: Aoki, Boyle, Jenkins, Akin, Garvey & Smith
_released: 2017
_type: Long-form Comic
_license: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

THEFT: A History of Music

Aoki, Boyle, Jenkins, Akin, Garvey & Smith

Not the comic we asked for, but the comic we needed

260 pages, fully illustrated, and covering 2000 years of Music and Copyright history: it is discovering and sharing projects like these that make writing this magazine such a joy.

Following 3 protagonists as they travel through time, and written by academics of law, the audience is pulled through a wild journey spanning from the Greek origins of Western music to the recording explosion of the 20th and 21st Centuries, and everything in between.

In no universe did I expect to find cameos of James Brown discussing IP with Hatsune Miku, Plato, XKCD stick-people, DeLoreans, and a Public Domain TARDIS - all within pages of each other. It can take a moment to get past the initial culture-shock absurdity of it all, but it is totally worth it.

Links:
[Free Download]
[Physical Purchase]

_data

_creator: Falcom
_released: 1997
_genre: Tactical RPG
_license: Proprietary
_english-translation: Core Gamplay, not cutscenes

Vantage Master Online

Nihon Falcom Corporation

A gorgeous pixel-art Tactical RPG with a monster summoning twist

In *VMO*, you control a Master, who summons Natials: elemental spirits somewhere between Pokémon and the mythical creatures of ancient cultures. Each Master and Natial takes turns and can move to claim Magic Crystal tiles (recharging a team's Magic resource over time), or attack the enemy. Reducing the other Master's HP to 0 wins the match.

While the game is fairly accessible, the combination of Elemental, Day/Night, and Tile Terrain systems power up or down each creature in the game, resulting in a constantly changing strategy and battlefield. It is in mastering these systems that the games' true enjoyment flourishes.

Note: Make sure to set the Music to MIDI in the menu to enjoy a fantastic soundtrack given the limitations of the time.

Links:

[English Download]
[PSP Remake]

VIDEO

_data

_creator: David Sandberg
_released: 2015
_type: Short Film
_genre: Action / Comedy
_license: Proprietary
_funding: Kickstarter

Kung Fury
David Sandberg

So much style, it becomes substance. Perhaps *the* icon of the 80's resurrection of the 2010's

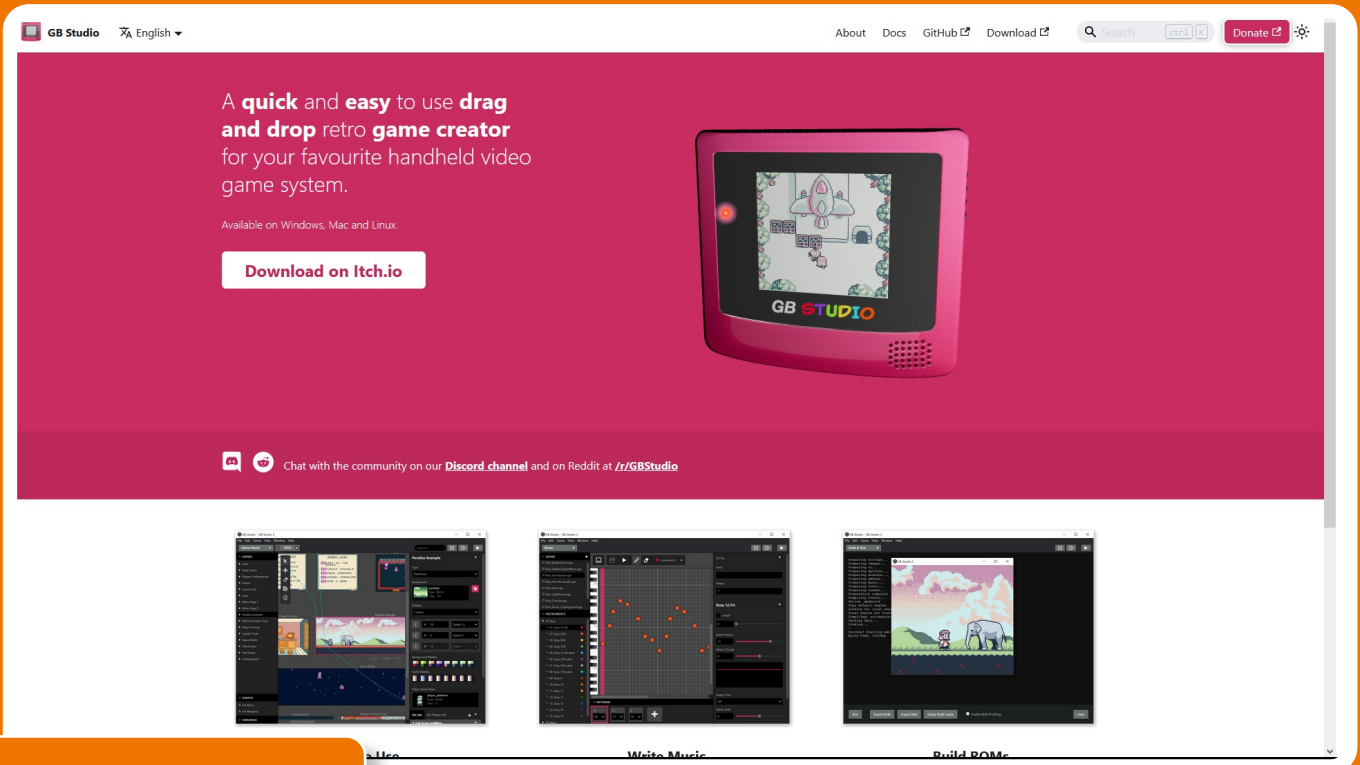
If you're a fan of the 1980's wave which re-emerged last decade, then you've almost certainly heard of *Kung Fury*.

Starting out with a trailer in 2013, it quickly became one of the great *Kickstarter* success-stories, gaining more than $630,000 USD in support from over 17,000 backers.

The 30-minute short film is still available to watch for free today, so you're better off simply watching rather than reading plot summaries.

However, fans of David Hasslehoff's *Knight Rider*, synth-pop, excessive Kung Fu violence, retro computer hacking, or almost *any* trope from the 1980's will have their decades-old nostalgia deeply satiated.

Links:
[Official Website]
[YouTube Release]
[Steam Release]



GB Studio

Chris Maltby

_data

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_creator: Chris Maltby
_released: 2019 -
_type: Gameboy ROM Maker
_license: MIT License
_source: Open Source
_exports: Various Platforms
```

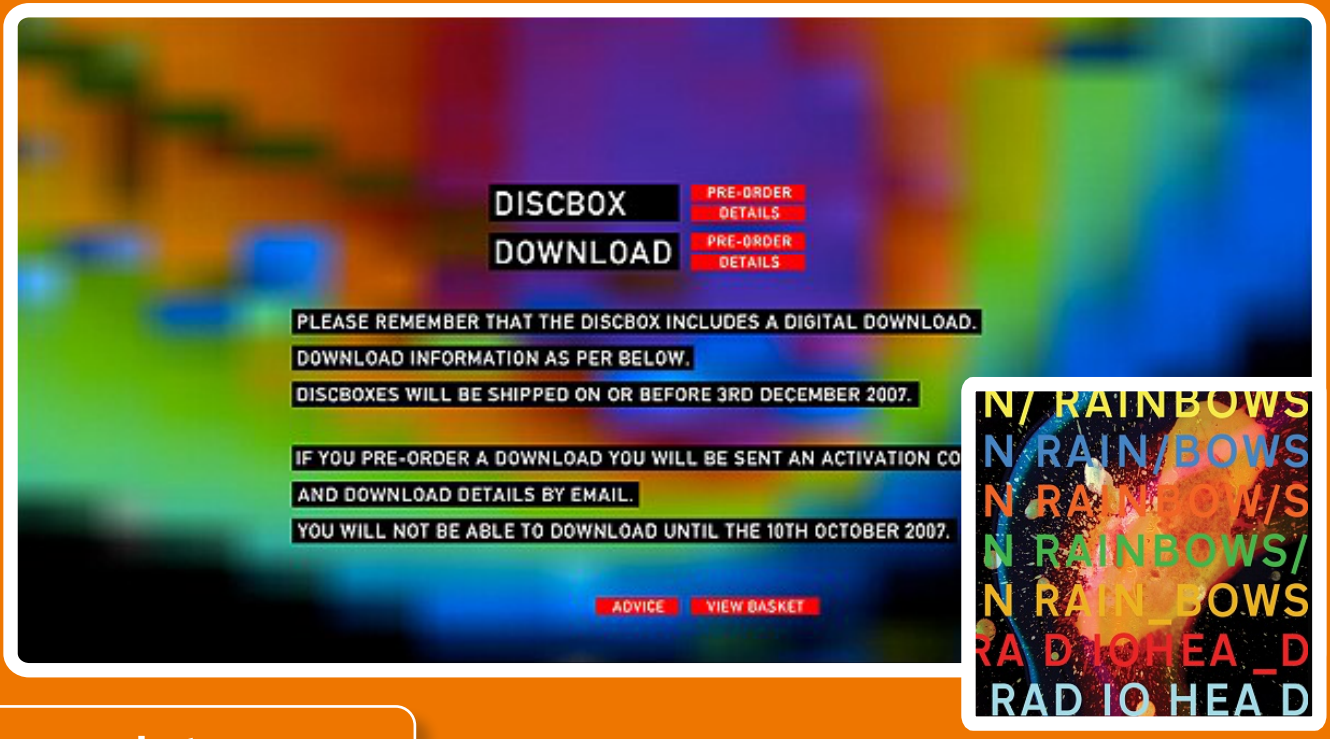
Making Nintendo Game Boy game development much more accessible than the traditional C and Assembly programming

Originally starting as several disconnected tools that Maltby made for his own Game Boy development, he spent some more time pulling them into a single intuitive program that could be used by others. Now up to version 3, and supporting modern GB-equivalent systems such as the *Analogue Pocket*, GB Studio has become a robust retro development system.

The software itself contains several popular starter engines for platformers, top-down RPGs, and space shooters, as well as a level editor, event system, animation system, and also pulls in *GBT Player* by Antonio Niño Díaz as a music composition system. At time of writing, one of the only external tools you may need to reach for is a sprite editor (e.g. Pixelorama).

Links:
[Official Website]
[Source Code]

BONUS



_data

_creator: Radiohead
_released: 2007
_type: Double Album
_label: initially Self-released, later XL Recordings, TBD Records

In Rainbows
Radiohead

Unfortunately retracted, In Rainbows was once a powerful symbol of what free music could be

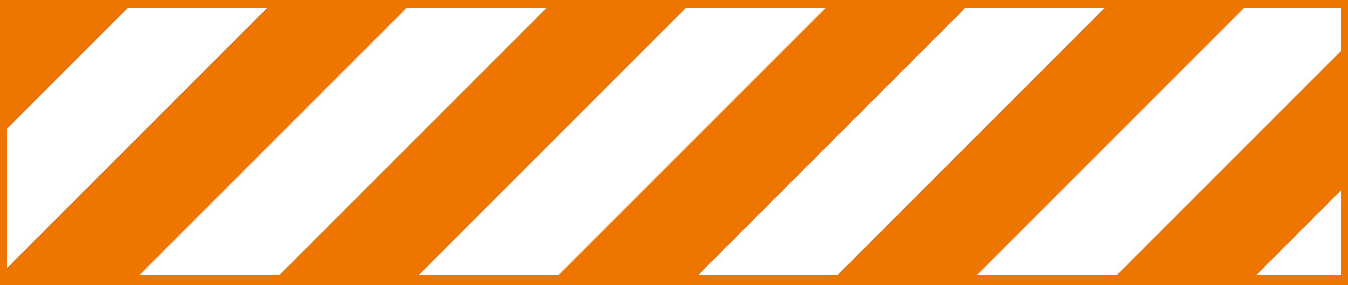
It won't be a common occurrence for this magazine to have inclusions which are no longer free. Nor were Radiohead the first artist(s) to release their music for free. However, *In Rainbow*'s initial pay-what-you-want model did send a mighty strong message to the industry at large, and for that it is worth celebrating, even if just as an important memory.

In a 2007 Music Industry, deeply anxious about the file-sharing revolution, Time Magazine declared *In Rainbows* "the most important release in the recent history of the music business."

It can be hard to pin-point why Radiohead's commitment to this pay-what-you-want model was shortlived, but interestingly, *Bandcamp* (which provides the same model for any artist) was founded the same year.

Perhaps the time was ripe for a new way to share.

Subscribe using the RSS Feeds found at
johnoestmannmusic.com/rss-feeds



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