15 November 1987

Computering Magazine

Game reviews and walkthroughs

Breaking the Code - make your own secret messages!

Win fabulous prizes in our Christmas competitions!

Artificial Intelligence - will computers make art one day?

The future of floppy disks

Are computers now so easy to use that your cat could program one?

We test the latest machines on five different breeds

Computering Magazine

15 November 1987

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This month's riddle:
Why is a literate child like a smoked fish?

Velma to go public

It has been confirmed that leading UK games company, Velma Inc., is set to have its IPO in the new year. "VI", as it is fondly referred to by its fans (according to the press-release I have cut and pasted), has achieved immense success from its mind-numbingly tedious and complex administrative games, including last year's break-out star "Claiming a refund from Great Western Trains" and this year's smash-hit "Why does Zoom keep dropping the connection?"

CEO of Velma, Charles Bellman, said: "The lawyers and the brokers have been beavering away for months and we are delighted that things are in a sufficiently fit state for us to float next year and inject much-needed investment into Velma Inc. On a personal note I am even more delighted to be receiving £27,121,871 for my share options!"

Some gamers have, however, had a less enthusiastic response to the news. Andy Baker, who runs the hugely popular "Vexed by Velma" YouTube channel commented: "Personally I feel threatened by this share offering. The pressure on Velma to increase profits could lead to the cutting of costs and as a consequence their games could become significantly less misery-inducing".

Drama at the Computering Awards

The great and the good of the UK games industry were out in force last month for the 37th Annual Computering Awards, despite the cold wintery weather. Many industry commentators had been predicting a clean sweep for DaphneHQ for their ground-breaking game "Oh god why am I writing this so close to the deadline?" however it was pipped at the post for the all-important Game of the Year award by rival Velma Inc.'s "Spectre (our lawyers tell us that we have to state in the title of the game that it has nothing to do with James Bond)".

DaphneHQ boss Ozlfu Weuvu Jptgtn

This news didn't go down well with DaphneHQ's CEO (who is famous for pretentiously changing his name to something utterly unpronounceable) and at about half-past nine, having indulged heavily in wine and cigars, he got into a furious argument with Velma CEO Charles Bellman. The two agreed to "take it outside" but by this point both were so insensible that they collapsed into the mud without exchanging blows and had to be helped back inside by their flunkies.

Fundraiser

Last month the staff of DaphneHQ declared themselves an independent country and insisted that any drivers who want to pass through their site had to buy a passport! Don't worry, they haven't gone mad as hatters, it was all a stunt to raise money for charity! Mud bespattered and drenched garments were more the rule than the exception, but at the end of the day they were able to make a donation of more than £3,000 to the Society for Distressed and Aged Puzzle-Setters. Well done gang!

TV Review - Bandersnatch

The latest offering from Barley Choker takes the concept of traditional television and turns it on its head. The viewer, rather than simply sitting down and watching the show, is forced to choose option after option to progress the plot. The notion that people would find it entertaining to sit in front of a screen and choose the direction of a narrative is simply nonsensical! You heard it here first - this will never catch on!

ESOTERIC PROGRAMMING

We are always interested in esoteric programming languages - those that have been made for fun, as a joke, or to prove a point. This month's language is PABLO - a clever but indecipherable language used to demonstrate advanced encryption techniques. We are feeling it may be difficult to understand! We're not even sure quite what this program does. Or even if it's a full program?!

```
VHELV*UOKLR
RB?S8BBBOI%
L-FQ9HNNSOR
S^N^N#QVW=<!
S^Y6P+G$1JO"
="7?@%H?.10[
Q U!$W<"J*6
CCCCCCCCCCC
```

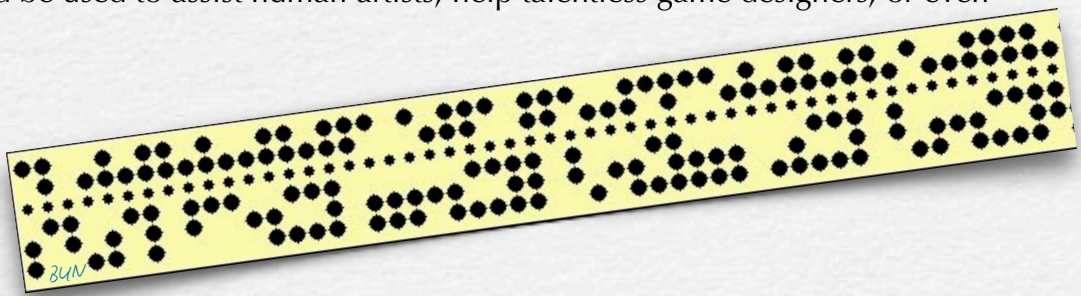
AI ART

There are many uses of Artificial Intelligence today, but could AI make art in the future? It's a topic that technologists and futurists have been furiously debating.

Some say it may never be possible, but others believe that computers may be able to generate images based on simple human commands in a matter of seconds. Sounds like science fiction!

Our resident artist has mocked up what she believes AI art could look like, guessing that it may resemble a painting or even a photograph. But the computer would probably also add random numbers into the image, as that's the kind of thing computers do.

In future, this technology could be used to assist human artists, help talentless game designers, or even win art prizes!



SECRET MESSAGE DECODER

Following on from last month's program to encode secret messages to a series of numbers, this month we present the program that decodes them!

Simply enter a number you generated with the encoder program, and it will print the corresponding word. Several numbers combine to make a full message, just press ENTER after entering each number.

If you share this program with a friend, you can send secret messages to each other!

The program could be improved in future to include all words in the dictionary - we have included a large selection of the most commonly used words.

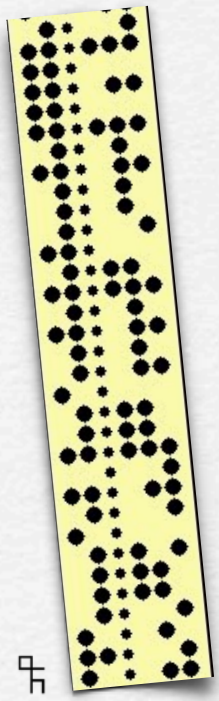
We are sure that this kind of technology will be used by top international spies in the near future.

Can you decode our message to you?

035040090208901

Thanks again go to the indefatigable team at DaphneHQ for this month's program.

For BBC Model B

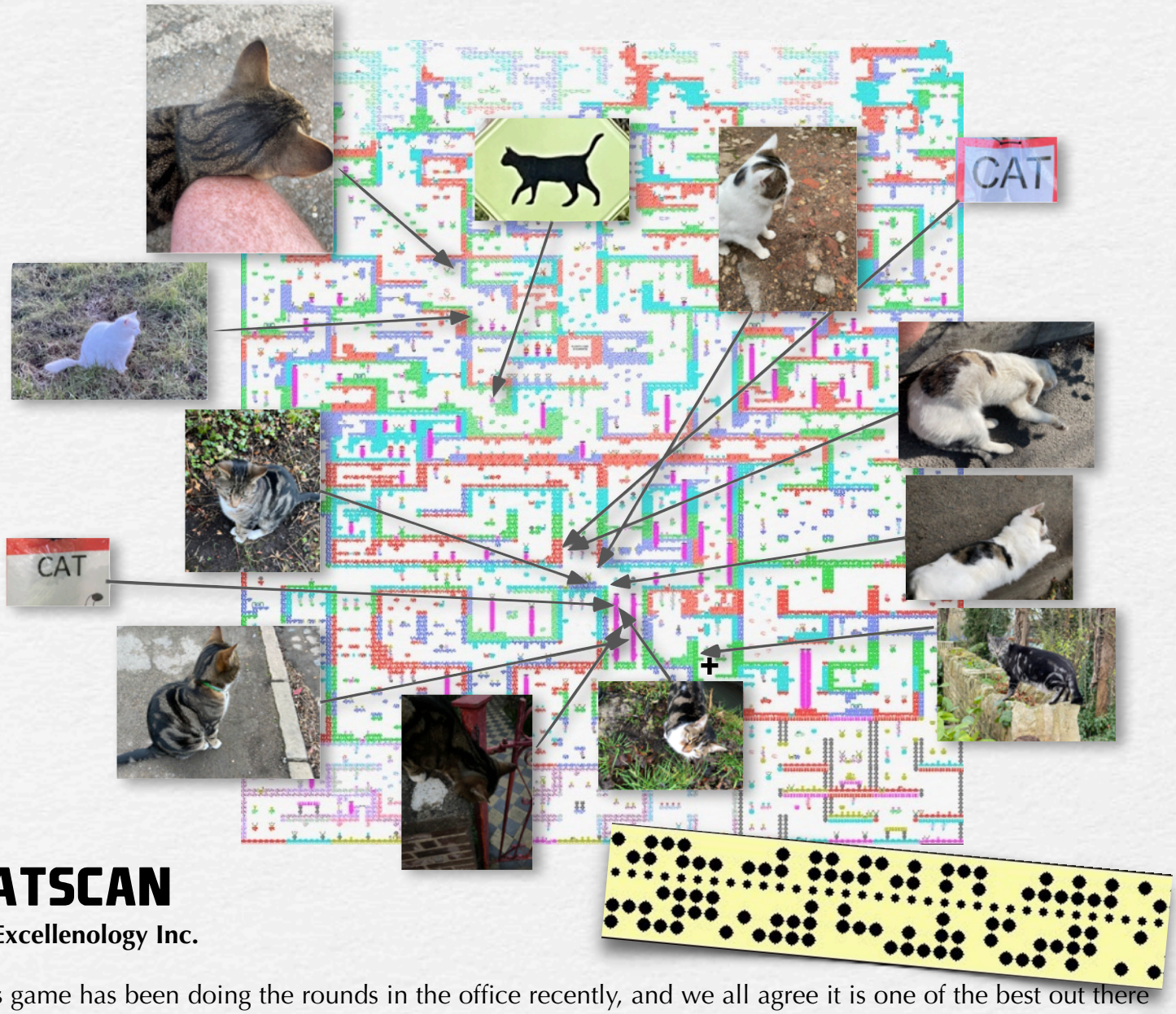


```
5 REM  SECRET MESSAGE DECODER
6 REM  BY DAPHNEHQ
7 REM  (C) COMPUTERING MAGAZINE
10 INPUT "ENTER CODE (E.G. 09402) ",CODE$
20 LET R% = VAL(RIGHT$(CODE$, 2))
25 LET L% = VAL(LEFT$(CODE$, 3))
30 LET SEED = RND(-1)
40 LET SIZE = 100
50 ON ERROR GOTO 120
60 LET D%=RND(SIZE)
65 LET O%=1
70 REPEAT
80 READ WORD$
90 IF L%=D% AND O%=R% THEN P.: P.CHR$141 WORD$: P.CHR$141 WORD$: P.: RESTORE: GOTO 10
95 IF L%=D% THEN  O%=O%+1
100 D%=RND(SIZE)
110 UNTIL FALSE
120 IF ERR=42 THEN RESTORE: GOTO 70

DATA FROM,SOUTHWEST,ROOF,BENCHMARK,GRILLE,CODE,LION,FIVE,SIZE,SHOP
DATA FIND,GRILLE,COMBINATION,BETWEEN,COMBINE,HANOI,SEARCH,COMIC
DATA BEFORE,LEFT,CLOTHES,EVEN,MAGIC,WHEAT,OLD,COLOURS,KEY,TURN
DATA FIFTH,A,FOLLOW,FAIL,ON,RETRACE,LEWIS,SHELF,POSSUM,PAPER
DATA OUT,POTTER,BOTH,WALK,MATRIX,ELIOT,BLUE,ENTER,HEXAGON,BACKWARDS
DATA FOLLOW,FOOD,NAMES,CIPHER,LETTER,COPY,ISIS,WIGGLE,UP,SEALED
DATA FEEL,STEEP,SMALL,GREAT,CHAPTER,NORTH,COPY,BOTH,SHELF,AND
DATA OF,NAMES,MUSEUM,REUBEN,FOR,STUMP,FIVE,A,OUT,UP,LIGHT,THIRD
DATA SHALL,LOOK,HEXAGON,CIPHER,X,SEARCH,THE,PUB,GOD,DATA,FIVE
DATA HOUSE,PACES,IS,DARK,MARKET,RED,THE,SEALED,SOUTH,SECOND
DATA DOOR,TREASURE,LION,ODD,SQUARE,THIRD,SQUARE,DEGREE,MORSE
DATA PRACTICAL,BEGINNING,TREACLE,LETTER,HERRING,THE,BOOK,AT
DATA SAINT,SIGN,WITH,HOLE,WHICH,TEN,CIRCLE,GATE,POST,CODE,IN
DATA BEGINNING,WHEEL,PATH,PAST,UNDER,PATH,TO,SHIFT,GAME,PROCEED
DATA SIGN,MAKE,SQUARED,OF,OF,PROTECTION,REMEMBER,GRIDS,SIGNAL
DATA ALONGSIDE,WORD,FENCE,OUTER,AND,PROCEED,WINDOW,HOLE,BOOK
DATA THEN,SETS,FISH,PATRON,CAESAR,BEYOND,SCORE,STONE,SOLVE,PASS
DATA STUMP,COURSE,CORNER,IVY,AND,TWENTY,QUADRANT,MARKS,ENCODING
DATA PAD,MARKED,TO,JACK,TELEGRAPH,SEARCH,WHERE,PASS,VIGNERE
DATA FOR,CORNER,JACK,AND,EAST,WITCH,BEARING,DOOR,LOCK,EVERY,LOOK
DATA THE,TRAP,FIRST,BLOCK,SEARCH,WHERE,METRES,SPELL,MAZE,WEST,PABLO
DATA TRACE,TWELVE,A,OUT,WORD,LOCK,FELINES,LIBRARY,RIBBON
DATA CIRCLE,NAME,FELINES,THEN,LIETH,A,MUNGOJERRY,HOSTELRY,AT,TOWARDS
DATA HOUSE,FOR,RED,HOSTELRY,AT,ROT,HOUSE,LENGTH,COMBINE,BRIDGE
DATA THENCE,LIES,A,THIRD,THREE,IN,TO,WALKS
DATA PUT,I,YOU,IN,A,NEAR,UPRIVER,TO,SPIRAL,BORGES,RAINBOW
DATA LARGE,CAT,TRUNKS,EAST,OUTSIDE,HELP,BUILDING,PACES,SIDE
DATA AERIAL,CLIME,END,ROSE
```

TOP SECRET

GAME WALKTHROUGH



CATSCAN

by Excellenology Inc.

This game has been doing the rounds in the office recently, and we all agree it is one of the best out there at the moment. However, finding all the secret hidden cats is one of the hardest and most tedious parts of the game, so we present a handy diagram of their locations, to make it a bit easier for you! We find that starting at the bottom and working your way up works best. Good luck!

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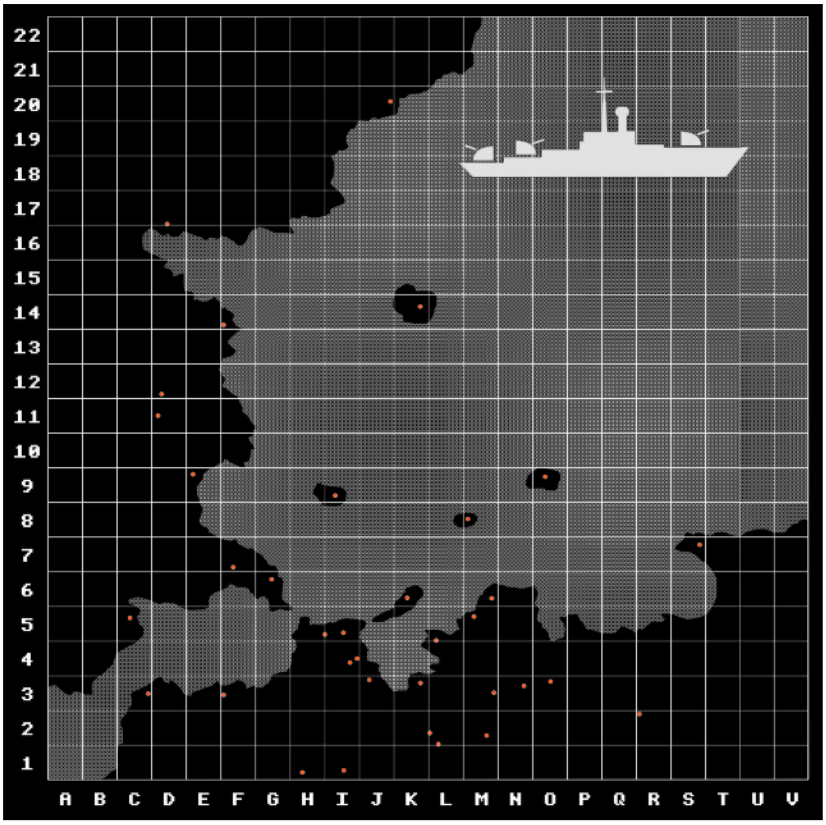
GAME REVIEWS

BATTLESHIP DOWN!

3/10
Really Good Software Ltd.



This modern take on the classic game of Battleships is out now for the BBC Micro and Electron. Players take it in turns to fire a missile at a grid square to try and destroy their opponent's armada of war ships. You can play with two players or one player vs the computer.

The gameplay is disappointing, with some battleships appearing in lakes (or islands?!) and when playing against the computer, it seems to guess correctly suspiciously often. Overall not something I would play for very long, but you may get something out of it.

The team in the office managed to beat the game eventually, by each choosing a section of the map to try and attack - Louis started with O15:T20, Thomas used C15:H20, Bernard tried O3:T8, and Tokuhiro C3:H8 - it was difficult, and there was hissing as well as cheering when they finished it!

We have kindly printed the winning moves for those wanting to cheat! Try D11, K3, I9, D12, D16, I4, M3, J3, M8, C3, S7, L2, E9, G6, M8, M5, O9, M2, O3, M6, I1, F3, M2, K6, H5, F7, J20.

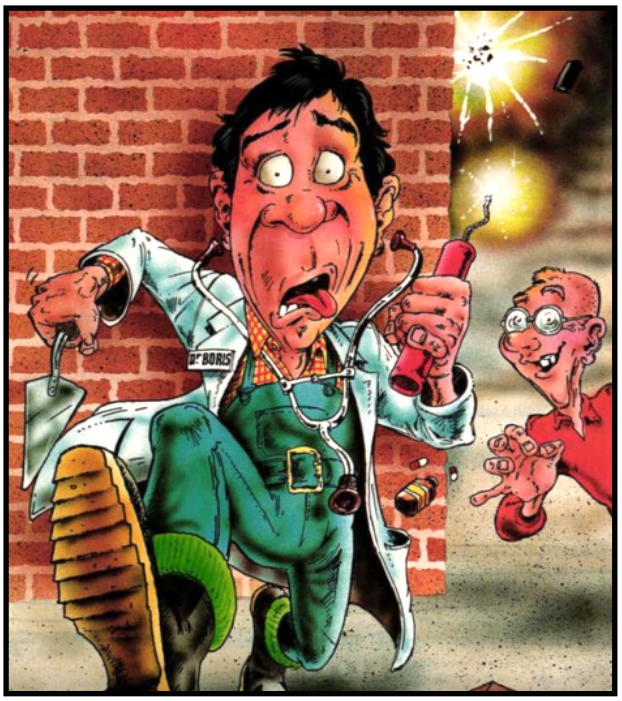
ACTUAL REALITY GAMES

There is a growing trend of "actual reality" gaming, with more and more people sick of staring at screens for hours on end. One company capitalising on this is interminable games developer DaphneHQ, who have recently released this puzzle game for several platforms including Wood and Bakelite.

The object of the game is to move the large square block to the top right corner, by sliding the other blocks around, in 27 steps. Sounds fun!

Some people predict that in the future we may all be connected to an "actualverse" where we can work, play, and live our lives. But the high cost of developing this means it may never happen. *Review by Arnold Eidus*

DR.BORIS



1/10
DaphneHQ

Your name is Doctor Boris. You just graduated from medical school and have gone to work in a new hospital somewhere near the Cotswolds. But the building work isn't complete and due to cutbacks in the NHS you have to go out there and do the work yourself!

This is a typically infuriating game from DaphneHQ. There are complicated dead ends, confusing information that may or may not be puzzles, it's hard to know when you've finished, and it is littered with opaque medical terms.

It seems DaphneHQ have all but admitted this by inclusion of a series of cheat codes on the back of the cassette case (276305003, 257695007, 21481007, 11713004) but even then it's not obvious how to use them.

Review by Mr. Bacon

QUICK REVIEWS

A wide range of brand new games have been pouring in this month. We've selected a mixture of raunchier games and tamer ones!

The Vindications A 10/10

Mamma Mia! *A 5/8*

Unrelenting Effort *A 17/9 (21)*

The Matrix *P 22/7*

Spherical Fruits *A 11/9*

Humpty Dumpty *SP 23/3*

Verbal Nonsense *P 7/9*

Crone Wars *P 8/10*

The Saint *P 2/10*

Flying Aces *A 5/8*

Gone Fishing *P 11/7*

The Dark Tower *P 25/7 (21)*

Treacle Time *A 11/9*

Enter The Labyrinth *SP 5/3*

The Mystic Circle *A 2/11 (21)*

CATASTROPHE!

5/10
DaphneHQ

From the team that brought you *Squirrel Frenzy!*, DaphneHQ are back with their latest adventure game. It involves exploring endless identical corridors, picking up vaguely useful items, and talking to characters that mostly remain silent.

The game is easily one of the most talked-about releases of the year. The vast media campaign, including social media engagement from none other than Dame Maggie Philbin, has created huge expectations. These expectations have, however, not been met by a long measure. It would probably be impossible for any game to live up to the hype surrounding CATastrophe, but even putting the hype to one side, the harsh reality is that this is a very poor game indeed.

The premise is that you are playing some kind of character wandering around some kind of place, attempting to solve various puzzles, whilst someone (or something) talks at you. The puzzles aren't clever, just irritating. Who cares which continent the cats came from? Do they expect the names of random herbs to just pop into my head? There are characters, objects, and locations that appear to have been put in there simply to create some thematic colour - well this player can tell you that certainly didn't work!

Gamers were hoping for more of the breath-taking gameplay and harrowing social realism of DaphneHQ's last smash hit *Squirrel Frenzy!* What they got instead is an embarrassing failure of a game, which was riddled with bugs on release. Three changes would have fixed this problem - get rid of that awful droning voice, get rid of the sodding puzzles, and put some bloody squirrels in it! Words like this are hard for me to write - I have been a fan of DaphneHQ for decades - but I can only give you my honest opinion. This is a cabbage of a game, and a bad one at that. However, we did enjoy some of the excellent sound effects, which unfortunately due to a manufacturing error were excluded from most copies of the game.

READER'S CATS

Thanks for sending in your delightful cat pictures! We're still not sure why though, as this is a computer magazine...

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VGA webcam

4. *"Mass designs"*
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5. *"One other seated"*
Cat-themed dot matrix printer

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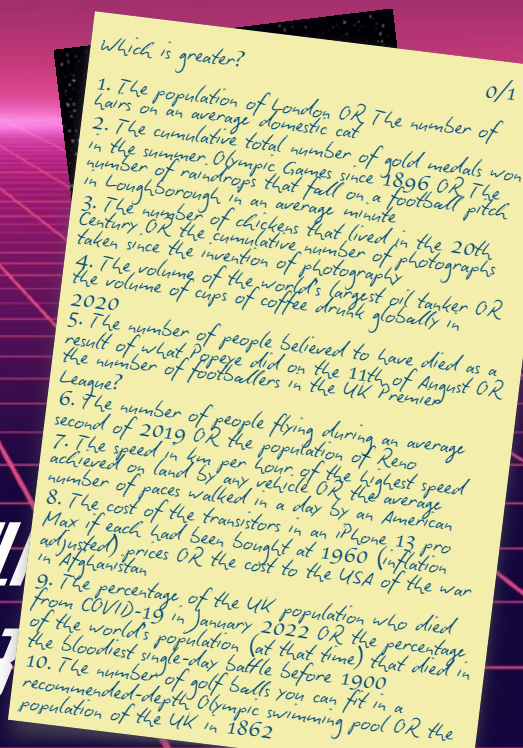

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CHRISTMAS FUN

No Christmas would be complete without a word search! Can you search all of the words?

P	I	E	S	T	S	E	E	R	M	A	T	U	Q	G	V	U	T	S	C	T	T
U	A	P	I	R	S	I	H	X	Q	S	S	Q	N	V	A	E	L	H	V	O	N
Z	O	J	F	A	R	M	N	E	S	Y	V	I	C	T	O	R	A	J	O	N	W
A	T	H	Z	A	C	N	G	G	Z	E	T	O	B	R	G	K	Z	E	A	B	I
L	I	L	B	A	Q	U	I	L	Y	E	M	Y	X	P	L	A	N	M	T	Y	T
O	A	D	M	P	F	E	L	T	U	D	B	E	P	G	I	S	E	W	L	E	C
T	N	R	Z	A	D	E	V	J	O	M	R	E	T	N	E	T	R	L	S	T	O
M	S	U	N	H	K	K	W	A	U	S	T	I	R	U	A	W	P	Q	X	U	A
X	F	O	C	X	K	O	S	R	T	T	D	I	X	V	H	C	V	O	P	A	S
T	B	O	M	J	B	A	L	J	U	R	I	N	E	A	C	J	Q	E	V	Q	L
L	C	L	Y	C	L	N	O	E	R	U	M	P	E	A	J	T	E	R	O	A	Z
U	G	U	N	D	B	S	U	T	U	S	U	Z	C	A	L	M	O	N	Z	O	J
A	M	E	S	X	S	V	I	L	C	R	T	O	R	I	J	O	N	R	A	H	B
T	K	A	H	A	N	G	C	D	U	S	B	H	O	K	U	E	O	R	J	G	E
B	I	L	L	B	F	A	X	I	L	E	B	K	Y	K	L	P	L	F	N	A	M
T	O	P	R	N	V	U	A	D	W	S	D	M	E	U	Q	T	U	S	J	O	E
L	E	V	C	T	R	A	D	Y	E	M	E	X	T	I	K	E	N	I	R	M	Q
U	N	J	S	K	U	S	T	K	A	R	O	T	A	P	Q	U	A	X	K	A	O
C	O	M	U	T	R	V	E	I	C	O	B	P	A	V	T	V	L	P	B	L	W
O	M	M	U	X	B	A	I	Y	Q	A	T	B	L	W	U	R	A	M	I	N	A
J	J	V	P	K	T	U	E	L	K	L	F	Y	M	F	K	Z	M	U	L	O	I
R	U	M	P	E	T	E	R	A	U	G	U	S	T	U	S	A	L	O	N	Z	O

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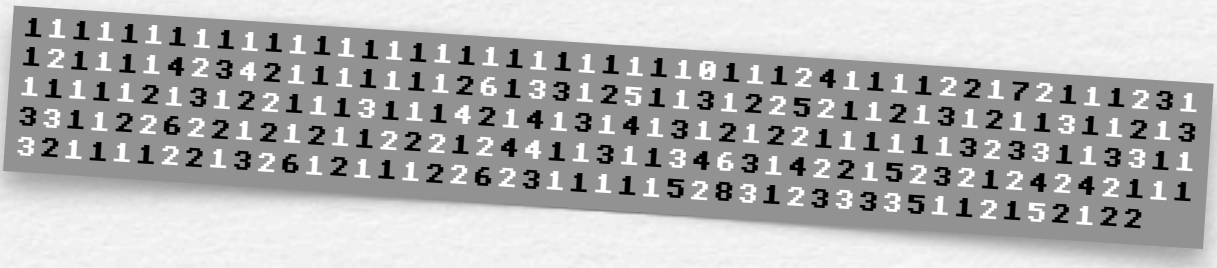
CHRISTMAS FUN

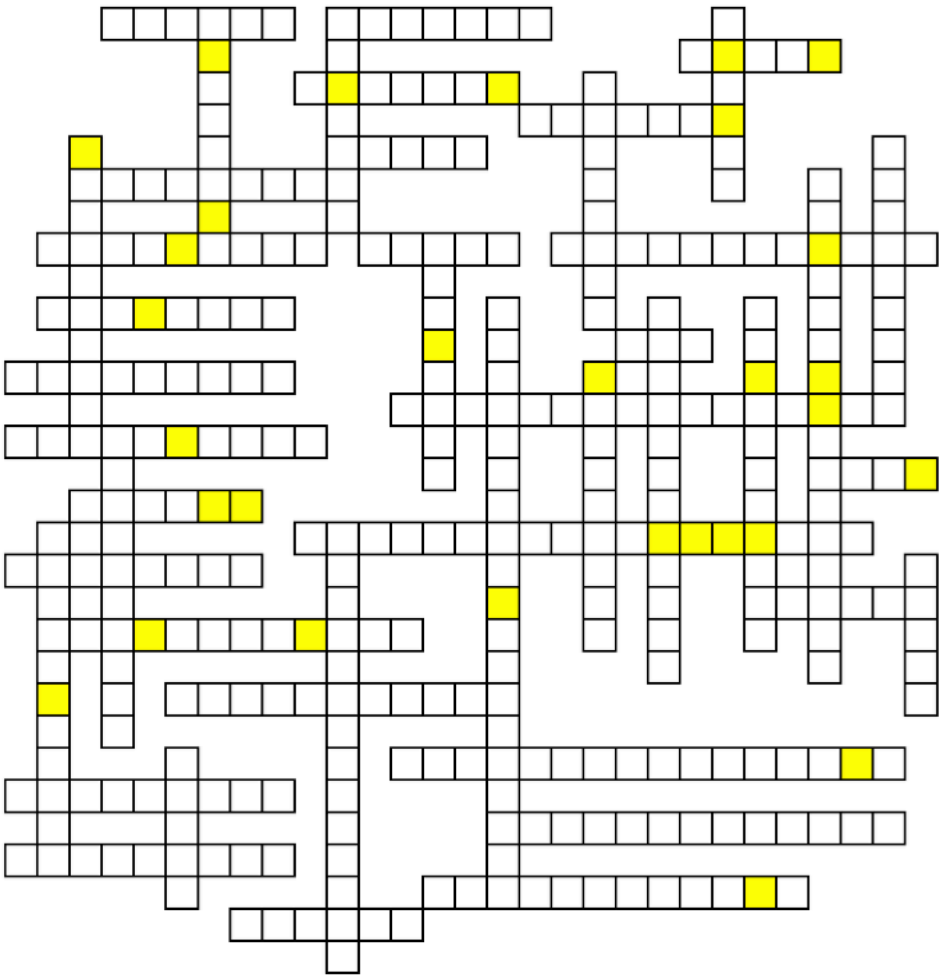
It's that time of year again! Our quizmasters have been hard at work coming up with the annual quiz. Remember that there are prizes available!

6. Where is a boulder covering someone who was once a sack?
3. Under where were the remains of a brazen wizard kept in times past?
1. David's root
8. It has tekhelet in its arms
4. Where does Isambard lend books?
2. Maud and Alice were first; Alice was the last. Where?
8. The home of the chaser whose followers won 110-60*
3. Where did the city arms become a doorway for the star of the sea?
4. In which SCR hangs the image of the man who only got seven years in exchange for his soul?
9. Nearest to where a saucy bookseller lit a jinxed candle
2. Home of the welfare cat who was a dog
1. Where Clive shared a room with Paddy
4. Where can you make a handkerchief disappear by running round it thrice?
1. Where can you find the ant-like first edition of the first book to be primarily about women?
11. Where might one invoke but not elect the wearer of a martlet?
12. Where hotfoot had a meeting with a maker of fake horoscopes in 1964
3. Where was a dragon turned into a hob?
2. Where a cipher was found describing a Protector who spoke of Piedmont and Poland
9. In which meadow did the devil talk to a youth who was pretending?
4. The workplace of an astronomer and a chaplain accused of treason
10. Where the owner of a mirror hoped to await the secret arrival of special men
9. Whose first principal might have seen a sombrero in France?
6. Centaurs were found on the staff of a major son of which lady of clairvoyance?
12. Whose employee may have inspired Macbeth?
4. Nothing will happen when the king breathes on the inspirational statues here
4. Cats?
4. Where Liz hid Jim in 1667, and they both remain?
1. Where did the first sorting ceremony happen?
4. I can see spirits coming up the stairs like bees. Where am I?
12. Who judged Duyvel-Landt a great success?
9. Whose scholars tied an unfortunate cat to an unfortunate bull?
4. It was about 700 deben. Where was it found?
2. Where was the last gas light between?
6. Where you might find a teabag
2. Where did the ghost in the machine guy leave his books?
2. He may have ignited a dancing frenzy
5. Elmo the Elephant was beaten by whose furry friend?
2. The passerine home of John, who was sceptical that anyone can transform men and women into cats
4. Which series started with object 782?



CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

What cats would you only want to raise for 6 years and 364 days? (8)
What would the Dutch throw instead of a cat, to cause chaos? (3)
In which battle was a defensive line of cats used to defeat the enemy? (8)
Which Prime Minister thought that his cat was so brave he named him after an admiral? (9)
Which leader had a cat named after an article of clothing? (7)
Which creamy word describes a group of cats? (7)
Which cat found food in the ruins of Sevastopol? (7,3)
What is the full name of the cat who had the longest tail in the world as of September 2016? (6,7,6)
Which cat was said to be smarter than an entire presidential cabinet? (5)
What is the name of the vampire cat that has a particular fondness for babies? (2,7)
Which emperor had suits of clothing made for his cat and her kittens (and got a wet-nurse to look after them)? (7,6)
What facial feature would Egyptians remove upon the death of their cat? (8)
Which city was set ablaze by 1,000 flaming cats? (7)
What was the name of the man who sought to defeat his enemies with rocket-power cats? (5,4,2,7)
What colour were the original cats pyjamas? (6)
Who first described meteorological cats? (5,7)
Where does a cat stalk the land at Christmas eating people? (7)
What was the name of the first person to not have a cat in hell's chance? (4,12)
Which cat steals corpses to eat them? (5)
Where where did a Russian Queen source her cats from? (5)
Who ordered the killing of the carpenter's cat? (10)
Where did 180,000 cats arrive by ship in 1890? (9)
Which king danced in front of a bonfire of cats? (5,3)
Who owned a cat that was 5 sun long and 6 sun high? (7,3)
Which Egyptian god protected the pharaohs against poisonous animals such as snakes and scorpions? (6)
Who didn't (despite musical claims to the contrary) name a cat after the Secretary of the Treasury? (6,10)
Where did Silky arrive, after an incredible journey? (9)
Where is a prophetic cat (who won a great victory in 2013) now to be found? (7,4)
Which cat got 7,319 votes in 2012? (4)
Who first defined space in terms of a cat? (7,7)
Who was given a cat made from a handful of smoke? (6)
What would resurrect a cat that lost its life due to its inquisitive nature? (12)
Who feeds Roman cats? (2,7)
What can't cats taste? (5)
Where was a cat mayor for 20 years? (9)
Which island has a population of cats that outnumbers people almost 4:1? (11)
Who was Ta-miu buried with? (8)
Which cat kept letters free of mouse attack for 14 years? (4,3,5)
Who confessed that a man accompanied by a red and black cat instructed her to hurt children? (6)
What parasite do you probably share with cats? (10,6)
Which cat was the first in space? (9)
Where did a $20m cat fail in its first mission? (10,1,1)
Which president had a bird-like cat? (6)
Which cat is ATU545B? (4,2,5)
Where is "Kattenstoet" held? (5)



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PIRACY IS THEFT

This card is part of a Software Protection scheme and is important. DO NOT LOSE as replacement cards will not be issued. This card is needed in order to register your ownership of CATastrophe.

Load game as normal. When the program has loaded, type REGISTER and press enter. You will be prompted to enter a letter from the list below, by colour and where it appears, reading from left to right. For example, if asked to enter "The 4th light yellow letter", you should type F.

Once you have entered all the letters required, your copy of CATastrophe will be registered and legal.