

# Why we thought it was a good idea to build a DACH games database

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# Confoederatio Ludens

## Swiss History of Games, Play and Game Design 1968-2000

- 20 Researchers
- 4 Universities
- Runtime 2023 - 2027

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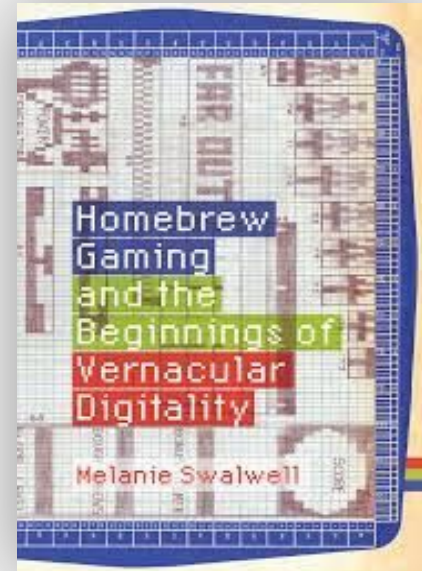
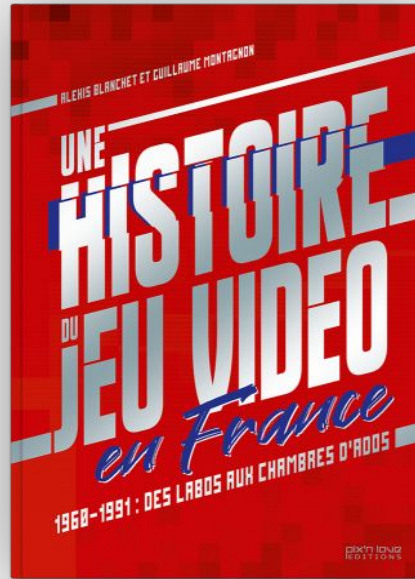
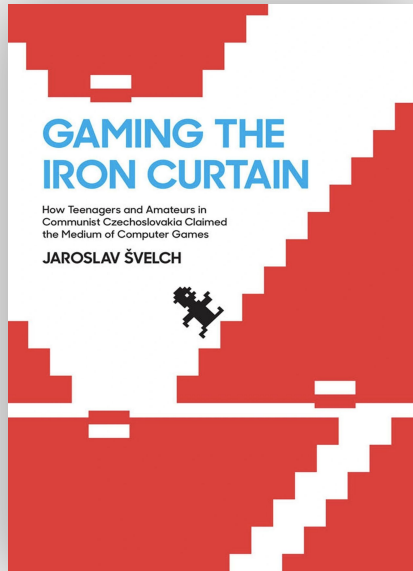


# Origins of the database - A Contre Histoire I

- Dominating US-Japanese master narrative
- Focus on mostly male, white geniuses and innovators  
*(who often implemented their visions against the spirit of the times)*
  
- Marginalizing other video game development histories
- Developer networks had formed in the EU around popular microcomputers  
*(ZX Spectrum, Amstrad CPC, C64, Amiga and MS-DOS-compatible computers)*

# Origins of the database - A Contre Histoire II

- Recently, focus shifted towards regional and national digital games histories.



# History of video games in the DACH-Region

## **Several research projects underway**

- SNF-Sinergia project “Confoederatio Ludens”
- Weave project with Austrian, German and Swiss participation in planning

## **No overview of the source situation possible presently**

- Creation of DACH database 2022 - 2023 and first draft published in 2023 in open access
- Not introducing a new standard, rather sparing colleagues these work

# Sourcebase

On the incompleteness of already existing game databases for the German-speaking countries, and the search for and creation of new sources.

# Sources & Platforms

- General knowledge databases
- General games databases
- Games databases with specific focus

Entries of the game **Ball Raider (1987)** on the platforms MobyGames, Hall of Light as well as Lemon Amiga.

The screenshot shows the MobyGames website page for the game **Ball Raider**. The page includes a search bar at the top, navigation links (Browse, Contribute, Community, Login), and a main header with the game title and a 'Review' button. Below the title, there are tabs for Overview, Credits, Reviews, Covers, Screenshots, Videos, Promos, Trivia, Releases, Specs, Prices, Forum, and Contribute. The main content area is divided into several sections: a cover image, a 'Released' section (1987 on Amiga), 'Publishers' (Diamond Software), 'Developers' (Golden Gate Crew), 'Moby Score' (5.0), 'Critics' (38% (7)), 'Players' (5), 'Ranking' (#1,436 on Amiga), and 'Collected By' (2 players). There are also links for 'Genre' (Action), 'Gameplay' (Paddle / Pong), and 'Setting' (Sci-fi / futuristic). A 'Buy' section links to eBay. A 'Contribute' section lists various actions like 'Add to Group', 'Add Blurb', 'Alternate Title', 'Content Ratings', 'Correction', 'Critic Review', 'Platform', 'Promo image', 'Trivia', and 'Video'. A 'Description' section starts with 'To become a member of the Warrior Gu...'. A 'Groups' section is also visible. The bottom part of the screenshot shows a snippet of the 'Information' table from the Hall of Light website, which lists details like 'Year of the first release' (1987), 'Number of disks (or CD)' (1), 'Number max of players' (1), 'Simultaneous max players' (1), 'Language' (English), 'Language in manual' (GCS), 'Hardware' (Amiga original game), 'Have cheatcode' (no), and 'Have SPS release' (no). The table also lists 'License' (Commercial), 'Publisher' (Diamond), 'Budget publisher' (Golden Gate), 'Developer' (Golden Gate), 'OS' (GCS), 'Artists' (Robbek), and 'Coder/Interpreter/Graphicist' (Heinz Luehm).

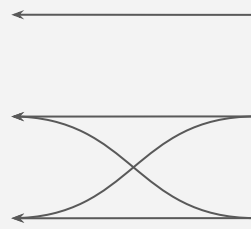
# Frictions

## Three categories of sources...

- General knowledge databases
- General game databases
- Game databases with focus

## ...three types of issues.

1. Content
2. Access
3. Scientificity





# Another riff on databases...

Design of these platforms is not in relation to scientific or journalistic work, their content varying enormously in quality, standardization and scope. Rather, they can be read as communal spaces of ritual, attempting to keep game history alive, as a cultural heritage through shared practice.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Hall Of Light' database. At the top, it says 'the database of amiga games'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'SEARCH' and 'Options - Download - Contact - Team - Update - Stats - F.A.Q. - Links'. A search bar is present with a dropdown menu for 'Games listing: F A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z'. On the left, there are 'Search options' including fields for Developer, Publisher, Budget, Artist, Genre, and various filters. The main content area features a paragraph about the site's mission: 'They who make researches into Antiquity, may be said to pass often through many dark, gloomy and dusty places, before they come to the Avia Locus, the great Hall Of Light. They must repair to old archives, and peruse many moulded and smelt-waxen records, and so in light as it were out of darkness, to adorn the present world what the former did, and make us see truth through our ancestor's eyes.' Below this is a 'Statistics' table and a 'Games with web links' table.

Statistics	
www: Game pages	18,139,195
www: Search listings	114,636,039
www: Developer pages	14,680,790
www: Publisher pages	13,929,292
www: Artist pages	123,995,972
Double Barrel Screenshots	6,376
Extra Screenshots	109,831
Conversion Screenshots	5,692
Cheatside	1,261
Games	6,477
Completion	50%
Developers	2,293
Publishers	1,138
Artists	8,604
Miscosns	10,910
Miscosns	7,132
Gamepage	10,578
Miscosns	8,795

Games with web links			
Amiga Magazine Rack	3,828	ExoticA	1,775
AmigaWiki	6,228	OGS	3,295
Have PIC: Gamepage	2,474	AmigaMemo	0
Have PIC: Manual	2,874	Wikipedia	0
Have reviews		45TV	89
Have resources			
Have SPS release			

The screenshot shows the entry for the game 'Leonardo' on the 'Hall Of Light' database. The entry includes a title 'Leonardo' and 'OCS'. Below the title is a small image of the game's cover art, which depicts a scene with a checkered floor and a character. The 'Information' tab is selected, showing a table with details about the game's release, publisher, developer, and other metadata.

Information			
Year of the first release	1989	License	Commercial
Number of disks (or CD)	1	Publisher	Starbyte-Worlwide
Number max of players	1	Budget publisher	Monkey Business (Electronic Zoo) - Worlwide
Simultaneous max players	1	Developer	The Shiner/rodents (Grafbild) - Europe
Language	English	Golden Gate Crew (GGC) (H-Infomark)	
Language in manual	English	Color	Christian A. Weber (Starbus The Invincible, ST/SCA)
Hardware	OCS	Color	Christian Haller
Amiga original game	unknown	Coder	Berni Strub
Have cheatside	yes	Graphician	Orlando Petermann
Have SPS release	yes	Musician	Burton Werner (King Roman)
WH0 install	yes	Misc	Reto Straub
HD install	unknown	Author	CSul
		Updated	2005-02-14 20:40:38
		WH0 information	
		HD notes	
		Conversion hardware	Atari ST/2
		Conversion notes	Commodore C64/128
		Classic compilation	



# On the setup of an alpha version

1. Set up a research project for the database, with metastandards and a controlled vocabulary, in advance. Well-organized search for sources.

*Disadvantage: Funding hard to secure, usable results come in late, possibly never.*

# On the setup of an alpha version

1. Set up a research project for the database, with metastandards and a controlled vocabulary, in advance. Well-organized search for sources.

*Disadvantage: First results are available - ideally - after four years, possibly never.*

2. “Quick and Dirty”: Quickly collect as much data as possible to get a first overview and clean up afterwards.

*Disadvantage: Standardization and taxonomy in retrospect can be difficult*

# “Looking for traces of early game developers in the German-speaking region”

*Constantin Bintz, Marlon Duncan Bonsch, Lars Brandes, Lisa Bresgott, Rika Bunse, Noah Dix, Victoria Hou, Daniel Kaspereit, Petros Kiorpes-Betchawas, Simon Körner, Rabea Kuschel, Christian Mischke, Sebastian Müller, Tanja Pabst, Ann-Kristin Potthast, Deniz Sargin, Clarissa Schiffer, Jan Stockschläger and Ebru Yaylali...*

## Second Round: Controlling, cleaning and expanding

*...Ann-Kristin Potthast with help from Marlon Duncan Bonsch, Lisa Bresgott, Rika Bunse, Clarissa Schiffer, Jan Stockschläger as well as Eugen Pfister and Lukas Daniel Klausner*

# Spreadsheets & Databases

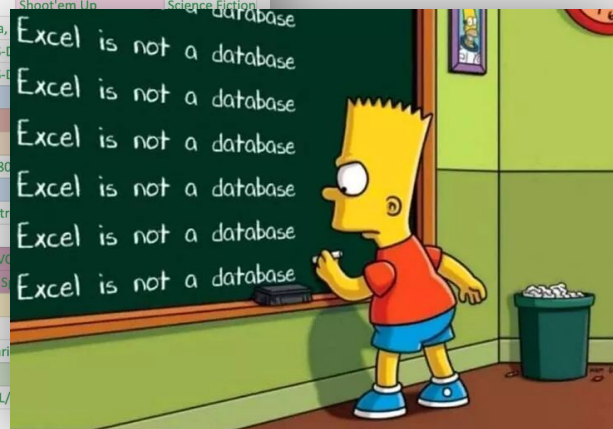
D-A-CH-Spieledatenbank (Delta)

Datei Bearbeiten Ansicht Einfügen Format Daten Tools Erweiterungen Hilfe

100% 123 Calibri 11 B I A

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	le	Spielname	Land	Jahr	Entwicklerstudio	Publisher	Entwickler*innen (Programm,	Plattform	Genre	Setting
139	138	Black Moore Castle	D?	1984	Jürgen Pilot	Computronic	Jürgen Pilot	C64	Arcade	Ort: Schloss na
140	139	BLIZZARD (Crack: Unilyte)	D	1988	?	Crysis-Software	Ottfried Schmidt (Melsungen), Ulr	Amiga	Shoot'em Up	Science Fiction
141	140	Blown Eye	CH	1997	la1n	la1n	René Bauer	MacOS	Shoot'em Up	Science Fiction
142	141	Blue Angel 69	D?	1989	Micro-Partner	Magic Bytes, Ariolasoft, Softg	Stefan Harms	C64, Amiga,		
143	142	Blupi explorateur (Blupi im Schloss, Blupi Exp	CH	1993	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belm	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belmon)	Daniel Roux	Smaky, MS-D		
144	143	Blupimania	CH	1996	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belm	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belmon)	Daniel Roux	Smaky, MS-D		
145	144	Blutrausch	D	1990	Cyberstyle	Double Density / Amiga Fun r	Rudolf Stember	Amiga		
146	145	Boingmaster	CH	1991	Matthias Hillebrand	64'er 1991/07	Matthias Hillebrand	C64		
147	146	Bolo	D	1987	Meinolf Schneider (heute	Application Systems Heidelbe	Meinolf Schneider	Atari ST		
148	147	Bomberjack	D	1991	KE-Soft (Kemal Ezcan/Mainta	KE-Soft (Kemal Ezcan/Mainta	Kemal Ezcan/Maintal	Atari 400/80		
149	148	Bombmania	D	1995	Megarts	M-Soft Software Design	Christoph Stahl, Carsten Deiter,	Amiga		
150	149	Bone Cruncher	D	1987	Andreas Kemnitz	Superior Software	Andreas Kemnitz, Andreas Staerke	Acorn Electr		
151	150	Bong	CH	1987	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belm	Epsitec SA (CH-1092 Belmon)	Daniel Roux	Smaky		
152	151	Bongo	D	1984	Kingsoft (Roetgen)	Kingsoft, Anirog Software, TS	Udo Gertz, Birgitte Gertz, Udo Ger	C64, C16, VC		
153	152	Bongo Beecatcher	D	1984	Stephan Schulz ( Vlotho)	Computronic	Stephan Schulz	Sinclair ZX S		
154	153	Bonn Ouvert	D	1998	Ikarion Software GmbH	Ikarion Software GmbH	?	Windows		
155	154	BonYx	CH	1997	La1n	La1n	René Bauer	MacOS		
156	155	Börsenfieber (WallStreet)	D	1988	Micro-Partner Software G	Falken Verlag, Maguc Bytes	Mario Knezović, Holger Krause, Pe	Amiga, Atari		
157	156	Bot Soccer	D	1997	CAPS Softwaredesign ULV	Expert Software Inc.	?	MS-DOS		
158	157	Boulder Dash	D	1986	Oliver Cyranka (Tübingen)	Computronic	Oliver Cyranka	Atari 800XL/		
159	158	Bowling	D?	1985	Hans-Peter Vogt	Computronic	Hans-Peter Vogt	Apple		

+ Liste (Gamma) Completed (automatic) CH (automatic) A (automatic) Backlog Austria Magazine < > Erkunden

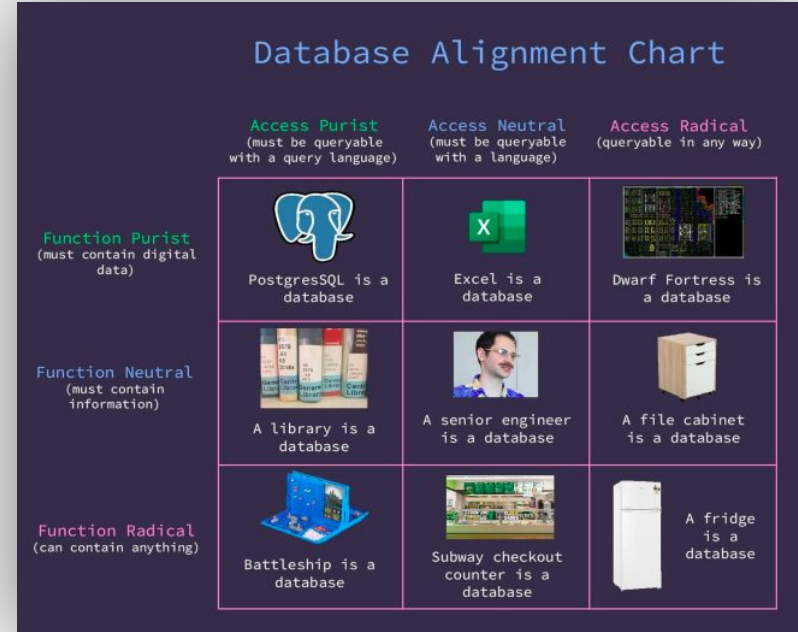


The DACH list and a meme inspired by the intro of **The Simpsons**

# From the beta to the gamma version

- Embrace the imperfection of an Excel spreadsheet
- Through SNF-Sinergia project, Adrian Demleitner, Addrich Mauch and Aurelia Brandenburg joined
- Meanwhile, the list grew to 1200 entries

- **Genre problem became acute**
- **Research questions define database**
- **The question of national identity arose (not fuel nationalism, but deconstruct collective identities)**



# Outlook I

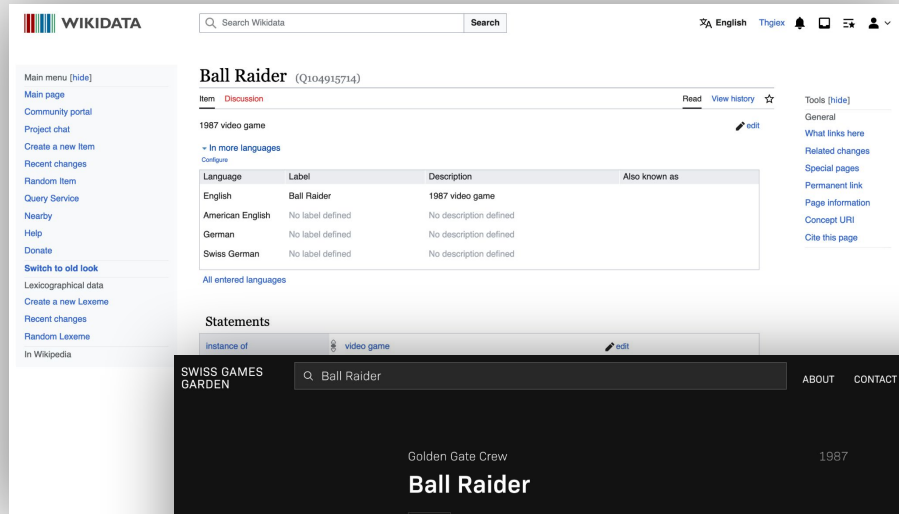
- Creation of an incomplete database, in need of expansion and clarification, hardly representative of all possible data
- Stimulating feedback through reactions, comments, additions and criticism for the Gamma version

# Outlook II

- Needing to deal with frustrating inaccuracy because we decided for *quick and dirty over funding*
- Making data available as soon as possible – not only for our own research, but for everyone who is interested.

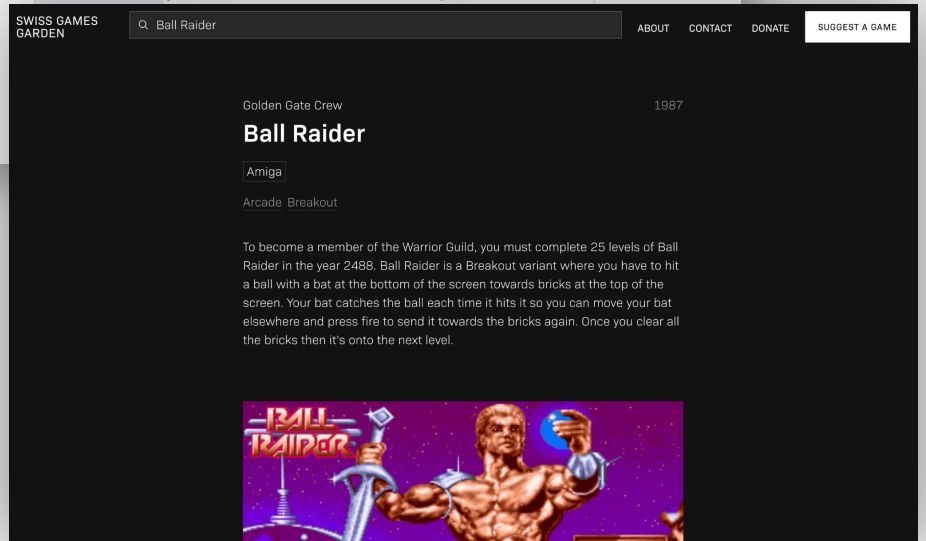


# New Beginnings



The screenshot shows the Wikidata page for 'Ball Raider' (Q104915714). The page includes a search bar, a navigation menu on the left, and a table of language labels. The table lists labels in English, American English, German, and Swiss German, all with no descriptions defined. Below the table is a 'Statements' section showing an instance of 'video game'.

Language	Label	Description	Also known as
English	Ball Raider	1987 video game	
American English	No label defined	No description defined	
German	No label defined	No description defined	
Swiss German	No label defined	No description defined	



The screenshot shows the Swiss Games Garden page for 'Ball Raider'. The page features a search bar, navigation links (ABOUT, CONTACT, DONATE, SUGGEST A GAME), and a detailed description of the game. The description states that the player must complete 25 levels of Ball Raider in the year 2488. Below the text is a screenshot of the game's title screen, showing a muscular warrior holding a sword and a ball.


Golden Gate Crew 1987

## Ball Raider

Amiga

Arcade Breakout

To become a member of the Warrior Guild, you must complete 25 levels of Ball Raider in the year 2488. Ball Raider is a Breakout variant where you have to hit a ball with a bat at the bottom of the screen towards bricks at the top of the screen. Your bat catches the ball each time it hits it so you can move your bat elsewhere and press fire to send it towards the bricks again. Once you clear all the bricks then it's onto the next level.



*Screenshots of Wikidata  
and Swiss Games Garden.*

# Thank you for your attention

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## **Why we did it...**

and still think it was a good idea to build  
a historical DACH games database?

Because no one else did...