TatungBytes

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JUST LAUNCHED

The Einstein, Now in Your Web Browser

Boot Einstein discs in your web browser, or write Z80 assembly and run it on an Einstein a moment later. Nothing to install, nothing to set up.

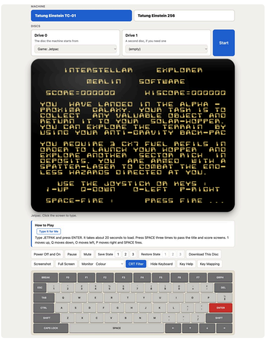
Hello again,

Until now, trying an Einstein has meant owning one, or installing an emulator, finding the ROM and setting it all up. This issue is about two new pages on the site that change that: one that boots Einstein discs in your browser, and one where you write Z80 assembly and watch an Einstein run it.

Also in this issue: a new course for the Einstein 256, a letter from 1985 that came with a very early build of Space Trap, seven more issues of Einstein Magazine with their programs ready to run, and a list of sixty seven things we know existed and still cannot find.

NEW: THE ONLINE PLAYER

205 Einstein Discs, One Click Away



Choose a disc, press Start, and a Tatung Einstein boots in front of you. There are 205 of them so far: 150 games and 55 programs, from Chuckie Egg and Manic Miner to word processors and databases, with 8 for the Einstein 256. Every one was tested in the player before it went on the list, and more join as they pass.

It has both machines and both drives, so a disc that needs a System Master gets one. There is an Einstein keyboard on screen, coloured like the real one, because a modern keyboard has no BREAK or GRPH key. Programs can save to their discs while you play, Save State keeps a snapshot of the whole machine to come back to, and Download This Disc gives you a copy as it is now. Where a game shows its keys, the player shows them beside the screen. Nothing to install, and nothing is stored on our side.

OPEN THE PLAYER →

NEW: THE ASSEMBLY LAB

Write Z80 Code and Watch the Einstein Run It



The Assembly Lab is built for the Einstein and nothing else. Type a program into the editor, press Run, and a moment later it is running on the Einstein above, assembled by the same GNU z80asm our course uses, with every mistake listed and a click away.

Then it lets you look inside. Run in Steps stops your program before its first instruction, and every press of Next Step runs one more, while the Registers and Memory panels show exactly what changed: the accumulator, each flag as a 1 or a 0, the stack, the bytes of your own program sitting in memory. Step Over runs a whole subroutine in one go, and Step Back undoes the last step, putting the entire machine back as it was, screen and all. Every line shows how many T-states it takes, the Video panel shows the video chip's own memory and registers, and a converter turns hex, decimal, binary and characters into one another as you type.

Every program in our Z80 Assembly course and the new Einstein 256 Primer is in it, ready to open, and when yours is finished, Download DSK makes a disc that boots on a real Einstein from a Gotek. Your code never leaves your browser. Using the Assembly Lab explains every part of it, and the course's new Appendix XI, Inside the Machine, uses it to show what your first program really looks like to the Z80.

OPEN THE ASSEMBLY LAB →

NEW COURSE

The Einstein 256 Primer

The 256 looks like a TC-01 with a new badge. Underneath, its video chip has 192K of memory of its own where the TC-01 had 16K, and it does a great deal more with it. This course follows on from Z80 Assembly for the Tatung Einstein and covers what changes when your code moves across, then everything the TC-01 cannot do at all: a palette of any 16 colours from 512, eight sprites to a line, bitmap screens up to 256 colours, hardware scrolling, a still score panel on a line interrupt, and a blitter that draws while your program gets on with something else.

It ends with River Run, a scrolling game that puts it all together. You do not need to own a 256: everything runs in MAME, or straight from the Assembly Lab, which has the course's programs ready to open.

START THE COURSE →

FOUND UNDER THE DIRECTORY

The Space Trap That Came With a Letter

A reader sent us eighty five disc images this month. One, labelled "Pre product Space trap", held the finished game and a letter from John Line of Gem Software to Dave at Tatung, dated 29 March 1985: "Herewith, a very, very, pre-prod copy of Space-Trap for Einstein", with a cheat mode "to be treated on a need to know basis". The copy he posted had been written over by the release, but its sectors were never reused. It came back whole: six planets, nine kilobytes smaller than the game that shipped.

Most of the programs on those eighty five discs were already in the library, and the discs were worth every minute anyway. That is why we have written Help Us Preserve the Einstein's Software. If you have an Einstein and a Gotek, you already own a disc imager: the BACKUP command on your System Master copies every sector, deleted files and all, and Dump a Disc With Nothing but a Gotek shows how in seven steps. Then send us the images, even of games you are sure we have.

SHARE YOUR DISCS →

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

Seven Issues of Einstein Magazine, Programs Included

The UK Einstein User Group's own magazine kept going long after the shops gave up on the machine. We have scanned seven issues from 1995 and 1996, Nos 73, 74 and 76 to 80, with the companion newsletters posted out with them, and every one has searchable text.

The programs they printed are on eight listings discs, Nos 73 to 80, typed in, tested and bootable: a British calendar that gets September 1752 right, a National Lottery number picker dated November 1994, and David Williams's Memory Contents, which walks through the Einstein's memory fifteen bytes at a time. Start it at 15873 and it shows you itself. It is the Assembly Lab's memory panel, written in Xtal BASIC thirty one years earlier.

START WITH NO. 73 →

WANTED

Sixty Seven Things We Know Existed

The library now lists what it does not have as well as what it does. Each wanted entry says what we know about the missing thing and where it was last seen: the Tatung Portable and the TPC-2000, the Speculator 256, Tony Brewer's 80 column colour card, Tatung's own brochure and price lists, the early issues of the user group newsletters, and the games that were announced for the Einstein and not found since. Look for "Wanted" on a library card. If you have one of them, or know who might, please tell us.

SEE THE MISSING GAMES →

The player and the lab are brand new, so if a disc does not behave, or the lab does something you did not expect, we would really like to know. Reply to this email or get in touch on the site.

GET IN TOUCH