

Trinity University

Digital Commons @ Trinity

Library Faculty Research

Coates Library

2019

META-FAQ: What Motivates the Authors of Video Game Walkthroughs?

Michael J. Hughes

Trinity University, mhughes@trinity.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/lib_faculty



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Hughes, Michael J., "META-FAQ: What Motivates the Authors of Video Game Walkthroughs?" (2019).
Library Faculty Research. 102.

https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/lib_faculty/102

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Coates Library at Digital Commons @ Trinity. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty Research by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Trinity. For more information, please contact jcostanz@trinity.edu.

META-FAQ

What Motivates the Authors of Video Game Walkthroughs?



Michael Hughes | @mobilesworking
Trinity University

The Rundown

- A short history of the video game walkthrough
- GameFAQs: more than a repository
- Motivations of the walkthrough author
- Whither the walkthrough?

c. In video and computer gaming: a step-by-step guide to completing a game from beginning at to end.

[Categories »](#)

- 1988 *inCider* May 110/1 She points out that you'll also find [walkthroughs](#), maps, and vendor support for games from such companies as Origin, Sir-Tech, Epyx, [etc.].
- 2001 *PC Gamer* Oct. 104/1 Excellent full [walkthrough](#) with screenshots, FAQs and unit run-downs for the soon-to-be-released strategy title.
- 2015 *Entertainment Newsweekly* 27 Mar. 138 Top community collaborators were..invited to author a 'Super [Walkthrough](#) video series', where they serve as on screen guides for new and existing players.



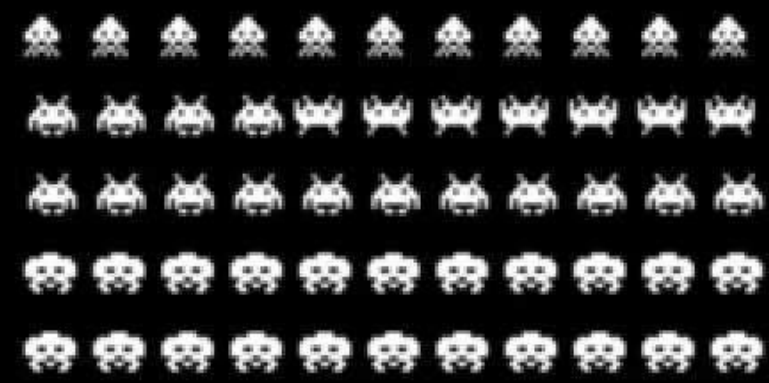
4

2



SCORE<1> HI-SCORE SCORE<2>

0990 0000



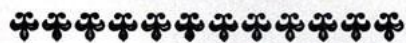
3 

CREDIT 00

STRATEGY SESSION



HOW TO ZAP MORE SPACE INVADERS



The only thing that's more fun than playing electronic games is playing them well enough to beat your friends and relations more often than they beat you. Losing gracefully may qualify as polite behavior, but winning with style is a

by Frank Tetro Jr.

protective shields determines the best strategy. After destroying the first three hordes of alien invaders, players must adjust their tactics to allow for the lack of shelter against the rain of bombs from above.

There are dozens of methods for eliminating the first three sets of invaders, but here's one that seems to work for most people:

As soon as the game begins, slide the horizontally mobile cannon to the extreme right and destroy the vertical column. Then zip over to the far left and

the one that just bit the dust, just 12 aliens will be left. Right about this time, the mother ship should be making another one of its flights. After dealing with it in the customary manner, destroy the remaining aliens in whatever order seems best.

The next batch of aliens will start even lower. However, all the walls after that will begin from the same point. The strategy outlined previously will still work just fine.

Arcaders who've practiced quick shooting should be able to blast aliens until their hands get tired.

DELL-17058-2.95

From the Editors of

**electronic
GAMES**

THE PLAYER'S STRATEGY GUIDE

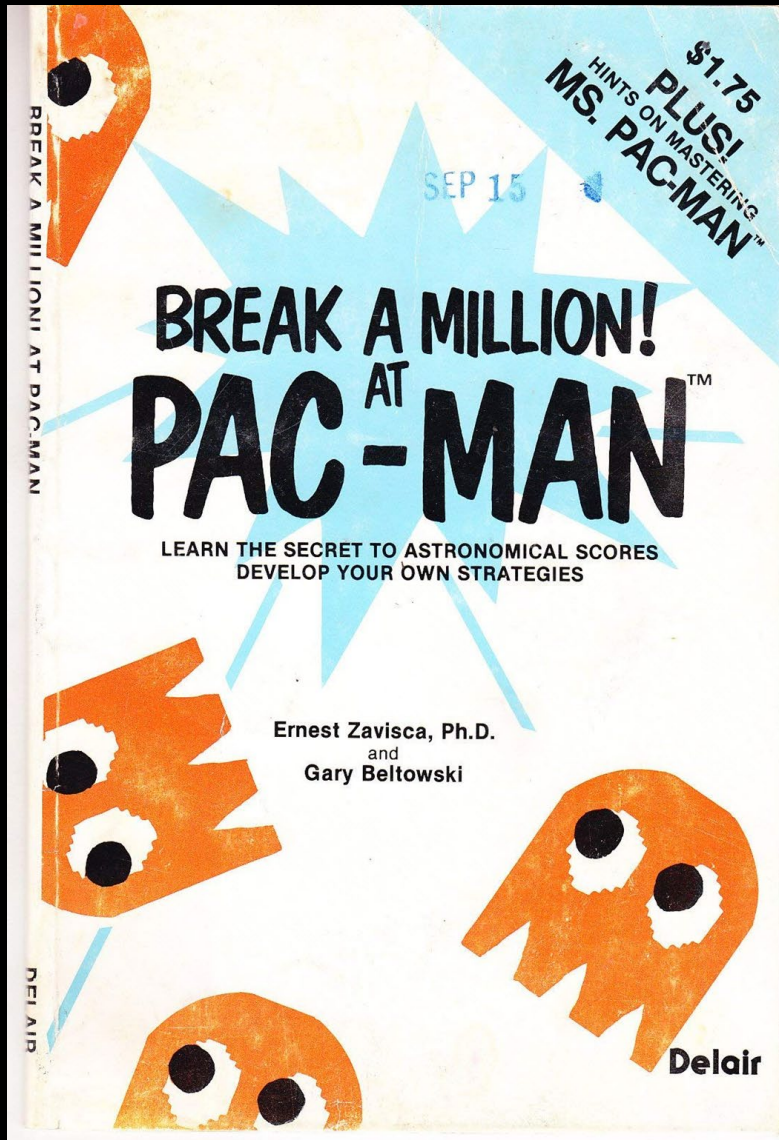
to ATARI VCS Home Video Games

Including *ACTIVISION*, *TELE-ARCADE*,
and *GAMES BY APOLLO*



STRATEGIES
FROM THE MASTERS DESIGNED TO MAKE
YOU A BETTER PLAYER!

• Plus a Buyer's Directory •
for Every Atari®-Compatible Cartridge Available Today
and Exclusive Previews of Soon-to-be-Released Games!



BREAK A MILLION! AT PAC-MAN

SEP 15

\$1.75
PLUS!
HINTS ON MASTERING
MS. PAC-MAN™

BREAK A MILLION! AT PAC-MAN™

LEARN THE SECRET TO ASTRONOMICAL SCORES
DEVELOP YOUR OWN STRATEGIES

Ernest Zavisca, Ph.D.
and
Gary Beltowski

Delair

I never really knew what the Internet was until I was in college. My first experiences were with telnetting to MUDs reading USENET, and browsing Gopher sites.

Yes, Gopher. We lived in primitive times back then, my friend.

And whilst in the Gopher-space, probably sometime in 1993 or so, I stumbled across [Andy Eddy's FTP site at Netcom](#). It was *the* resource for video game FAQs on the whole of the Internet. It consisted of probably 100 or so USENET FAQs covering mostly arcade fighting games, but a few console games as well. Unfortunately, being on a public FTP server with a limited number of connections, it became harder and harder and harder to get to as time went on.



VGFA

Video Game FAQ Archive

Last updated December 20 1996 - 958 FAQs Online

[Computer Game FAQs are here!](#)



**Arcade
Games**

3DO



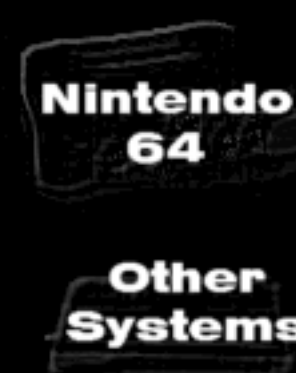
**Sony
Playstation**

**Sega
Genesis**



**Sega
Saturn**

**Super
Nintendo**



**Nintendo
64**

**Other
Systems**

Features **What's New** **Search** **Feedback**
Requests **Authors** **VGFA FAQ**



GameFAQs Contributors

Search topics for this board

New Topic

Page **1** of 9 [Next >](#) [Last >>](#)

You're browsing the GameFAQs Message Boards as a guest. [Sign Up](#) for free (or [Log In](#) if you already have an account) to be able to post messages, change how messages are displayed, and view media in posts.

Boards » GameFAQs Contributors

Topic	Created By	Msgs	Last Post
Unofficial GameFAQs Badges V2 Guide Pages: [1, 2, 3]	ZeoKnight	26	2/28 8:06PM
Post your contribution summary here! Vol. 3 Pages: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]	Mookiethebold	50	2/7 7:24PM
Frequently Asked Questions about Game Saves (first draft) Pages: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ... 13, 14, 15, 16, 17]	jimfish	166	10/11 3:26PM
Frequently Asked Questions about Cheats 2.1 (Required Reading Before Posting)	SBAllen (A)	4	7/25/2007
==Frequently Asked Questions about Game Data== Pages: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]	Tigger93	69	5/1/2007

MORTAL KOMBAT II:

THE DEATH PUNCH

By: Chris McCullough
25096@ef.gc.maricopa.edu

The following is info on a new type of move on Mortal Kombat II. Since it looks like mk2faq16 is the last of the MKII faqs, I felt it necessary to make a mini faq on this topic. But enough bantering, on with the subject...

WHAT IS THE 'DEATH PUNCH'?



~~~~~  
| T I L L T H E E N D O F T I M E |  
|~~~~~

~\~/~~~~~\~/~  
| || Guide written and compiled by A I e x || |  
|\_||\_\_\_\_\_||\_|

~~~~~  
| Author: Alex Eagleson |
| Began: September 8th, 2005 |
| Completed: September 9th, 2005 |
| Email: StarOceanDC(at)gmail(dot)com |
| Donations [Paypal]: StarOceanDC(at)gmail(dot)com |
| University of Guelph, Ontario |
|~~~~~

~\~/~~~~~\~/~
| || Plot spoilers are omitted wherever possible || |
|_||_____||_|
~~~~~

**WHOA**  
**SAY WHAT?**

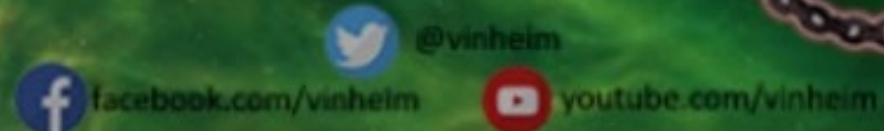
**NUH-UH**



vinheim

Sage ?

Home Bio Boards Contributions Games




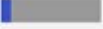
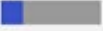


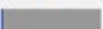
### Board User Information

|                        |                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| User Name              | vinheim                                                                                                                                         |
| User ID                | 4112500                                                                                                                                         |
| Board User Level       | 37: Sage ?                                                                                                                                      |
| Account Created        | Friday, May 25, 2007 11:06 PM                                                                                                                   |
| Last Visit             | Monday, March 25, 2019 4:42 PM                                                                                                                  |
| Signature              | Total Files / Complete FAQs / Starred FAQs / KB: 83 / 50 / 22 / 12,969KB<br><a href="http://youtube.com/vinheim">http://youtube.com/vinheim</a> |
| Karma                  | 3433                                                                                                                                            |
| Active Messages Posted | 4                                                                                                                                               |





## EARNED BADGES

| Name ↕          | Description ↕                                                      | To Next Level ↕                                                                             | Awarded ↕    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 🏆 Birthday x11  | Account is a year old                                              | 84%<br>  | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Faithful x4   | Visited 10 consecutive days (1)                                    | 10%<br>  | 1 month ago  |
| 🏆 Visitor x8    | Visited the site on 250 different days (2168)                      | 67%<br>  | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Voter x5      | Voted in 250 Polls of the Day (1306)                               | 22%<br>  | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Poster        | Posted a message on 250 different days on the Message Boards (333) | 33%<br>  | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Wordsmith x11 | Won FAQ of the Month (11)                                          | ---                                                                                         | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Author        | Submitted 50 written FAQs (80)                                     | 60%<br> | 3 months ago |
| 🏆 Author        | Submitted written FAQs for 50 games (51)                           | 2%<br> | 3 months ago |

When considered in whole, **the literature on walkthroughs provides a picture of motivation but a hazy one, a composite sketch gleaned from the interstices of related investigations and decade-old interviews.** Establishing the extent to which this sketch accounts for the motivations of all authors requires a methodical investigation of testimony given by the authors themselves.

dozen times I've thought I've seen things. No, I won't say what. It ain't for a little boy like you. Just nasty things. Once it had something to do with those damn hedges clipped to look like animals. Another time there was a maid, Delores Vickery her name was, and she had a little shine to her, but I don't think she knew it. Mr. Ullman fired her . . . do you know what that is, doc?"

"Yes, sir," Danny said candidly, "my daddy got fired from his teaching job and that's why we're in Colorado, I guess."

"Well, Ullman fired her on account of her saying she'd seen something in one of the rooms where . . . well, where a bad thing happened. That was in Room 217, and I want you to promise me you won't go in there, Danny. Not all winter. Steer right clear."

"All right," Danny said. "Did the lady—the maiden—did she ask you to go look?"

"Yes, she did. And there was a bad thing there. But . . . I don't think it was a bad thing that could hurt anyone, Danny, that's what I'm tryin to say. People who shine can sometimes see things that are gonna happen, and I think sometimes they can see things that did happen. But they're just like pictures in a book. Did you ever see a picture in a book that scared you, Danny?"

"Yes," he said, thinking of the story of Bluebeard and the picture where Bluebeard's new wife opens the door and sees all the heads.

"But you knew it couldn't hurt you, didn't you?"

"Ye—ess . . ." Danny said, a little dubious.

"Well, that's how it is in this hotel. I don't know why, but it seems that all the bad things that ever happened here, there's little pieces of those things still layin around like fingernail clippings or the boogers that somebody nasty just wiped under a chair. I don't know why it should just be here, there's bad goings-on in just about every hotel in the world, I guess, and I've worked in a lot of them and had no trouble. Only here. But Danny, I don't think those things can hurt anybody." He emphasized each word in the sentence with a mild shake of the boy's shoulders. "So if you should see something, in a hallway or a room or outside by those hedges . . . just look the other way and when you look back, it'll be gone. Are you diggin me?"

"Yes," Danny said. He felt much better, soothed. He got up on

AND I THINK MAYBE THAT'S THE KIND OF THING I'VE SEEN.

MAYBE JUST LIKE THEIR ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN SHINE. MAYBE THERE ARE PLACES THAT ARE SPECIAL TO DO WITH HAPPENED TO THEM OR WERE BUILT.

what else could H. do?

his knees, kissed Hallorann's cheek, and gave him a big hard hug. Hallorann hugged him back.

When he released the boy he asked: "Your folks, they don't shine, do they?"

"No, I don't think so."

"I tried them like I did you," Hallorann said. "Your momma jumped the tiniest bit. I think all mothers shine a little, you know, at least until their kids grow up enough to watch out for themselves. Your dad . . ."

Hallorann paused momentarily. He had probed at the boy's father and he just didn't know. It wasn't like meeting someone who had the shine, or someone who definitely did not. Poking at Danny's father had been . . . strange, as if Jack Torrance had something—something—that he was hiding. Or something he was holding in so deeply submerged in himself that it was impossible to get to.

"I don't think he shines at all," Hallorann finished. "So you don't worry about them. You just take care of you. I don't think there's anything here that can hurt you. So just be cool, okay?"

"Okay."

"Danny! Hey, doc!"

Danny looked around. "That's Mom. She wants me. I have to go."

"I know you do," Hallorann said. "You have a good time here, Danny. Best you can, anyway."

"I will. Thanks, Mr. Hallorann. I feel a lot better."

The smiling thought came in his mind: (Dick, to my friends)

(Yes, Dick, okay)

Their eyes met, and Dick Hallorann winked.

Danny scrambled across the seat of the car and opened the passenger side door. As he was getting out, Hallorann said, "Danny?"

"What?"

"If there is trouble . . . you give a call. A big loud holler like the one you gave a few minutes ago. I might hear you even way down in Florida. And if I do, I'll come on the run."

"Okay," Danny said, and smiled.

"You take care, big boy."

You're just a little boy.

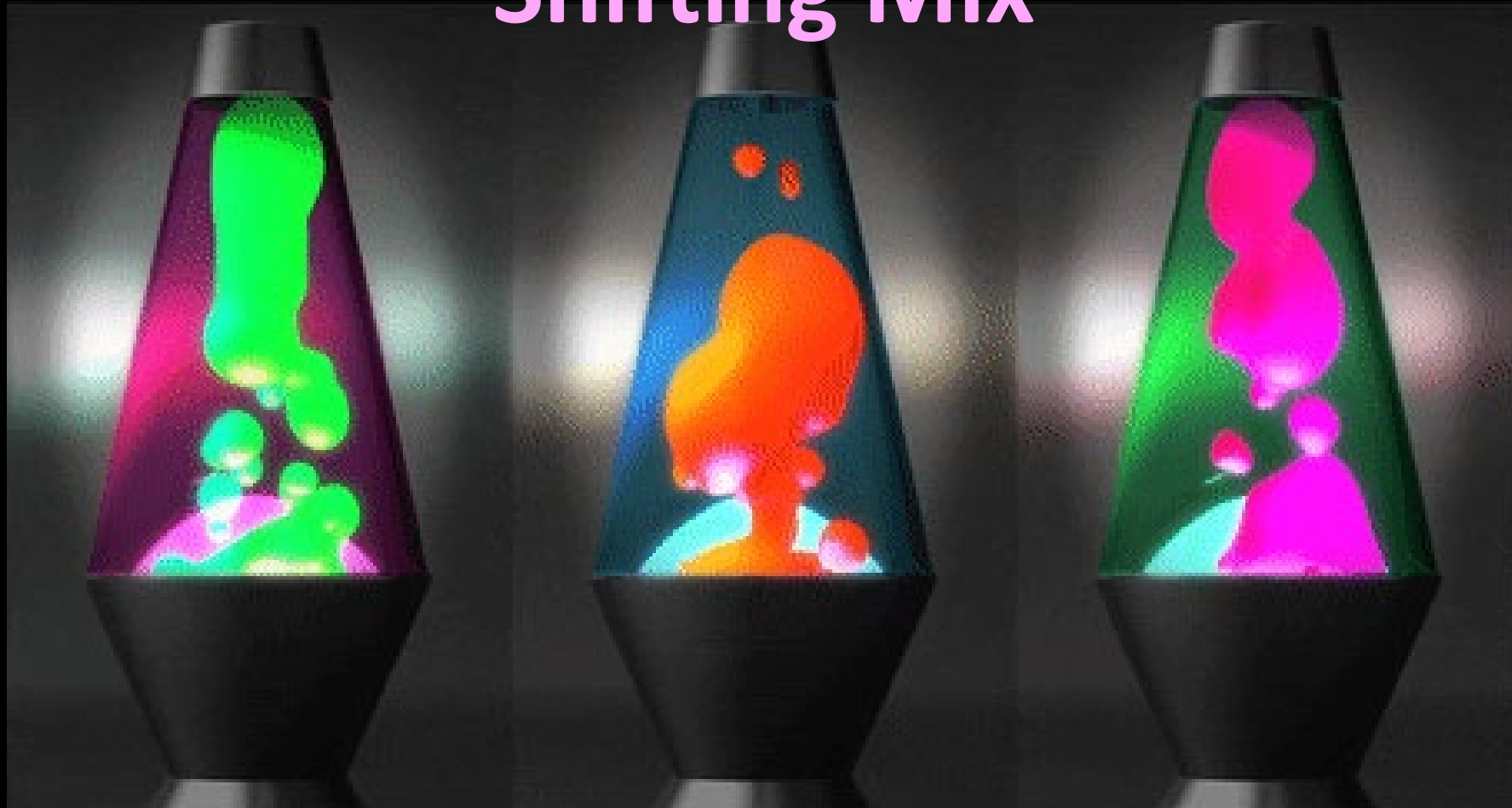
My number is on the wall.

Handwritten notes in blue ink: "Handwritten - any problems give call numbers give the phone." and "any problems no kitchen - you phone no. you have."

## Five Major Motivators

- Altruism
- Community belonging / social support
- Self-expression
- Recognition
- Compensation

# Shifting Mix



# ALTRUISM



Credit: @syirensong

# ALTRUISM

- Helping is often forward-looking; authors assume players will need help in future
- Helping as history, as preservation
- Comprehensively documenting the way we play

ENTER  
EAGLE  
PRESSURE  
HOLD

# "WartHog Jump"

A Halo Physics Experiment





# BELONGING

The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, 'What? You too? I thought I was the only one.'

C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*



# SELF-EXPRESSION



Credit: Katie Clark

# RECOGNITION



# Grand Theft Auto V

[Home](#)[FAQs](#)[Cheats](#)[Reviews](#)[Images](#)[Videos](#)[Answers](#)[Board](#)

## GENERAL FAQS

|                                                                                                        |          |                             |          |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| ★ FAQ/Walkthrough <small>HTML</small>                                                                  | 02/15/17 | sokkus                      | 0.95     | 618K      |
| ☆ FAQ/Walkthrough                                                                                      | 01/01/15 | RARusk                      | 2.8      | 1046K     |
| ☆ FAQ/Walkthrough                                                                                      | 10/23/13 | Bkstunt_31 / Absolute Steve | 1.60     | 696K      |
| 🏆 FAQ/Walkthrough                                                                                      | 09/24/13 | Andrew Testa                | 1.3      | 260K      |
| ● FAQ/Walkthrough                                                                                      | 04/24/14 | Philinanas                  | 2.0      | 1028K     |
| ● FAQ/Walkthrough (PC)                                                                                 | 05/18/17 | glenster                    | 1        | 1088K     |
| ●  Video Walkthrough | 10/07/13 | Bkstunt_31                  | 40 parts | 18h43m52s |
| 🕒 FAQ/Walkthrough                                                                                      | 09/21/13 | Foppe                       | 0.37     | 108K      |

# COMPENSATION



CONGLATURATION !!!  
YOU HAVE COMPLETED  
A GREAT GAME.  
AND PROOVED THE JUSTICE  
OF OUR CULTURE.  
NOW GO AND REST OUR  
HEROES !

# WHITHER THE WALKTHROUGH?





## END OF A PARATEXT?

- Migration to YouTube and Twitch
- Growth of alt-communities, e.g., Discord, and the decline of boards
- New subcultures for iterative play
- Too. Many. Games.



THE OFFICIAL POKÉMON

CONTEST CODE  
INSIDE EVERY GUIDE  
ENTER TO WIN COOL  
POKÉMON PRIZES

PLUS FREE  
POKÉMON STICKERS  
INSIDE!

ALL 40 BERRIES LISTED  
MAPS FOR EVERY AREA  
HARD-TO-CATCH POKÉMON FOUND

# Pokémon

DIAMOND  
VERSION

# Pokémon

FIRE RED  
VERSION

LEAF GREEN  
VERSION

PRIMA  
GAMES

Official  
Nintendo  
Licensed Product

The Pokémon Company GAME BOY ADVANCE

EVERYONE





**STADIA**

**The future of gaming is not a box.**



# QUESTIONS?

What motivates the authors of video game walkthroughs and FAQs? A study of six GameFAQs contributors

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v23i1.7925>

Michael Hughes || @mobilesworking

# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

2019 Virtual Symposium on Information &  
Technology in the Arts and Humanities

Video Games and Information Science

April 4, 2019

*Submit a webinar proposal at  
[www.asist.org/webinar-setup](http://www.asist.org/webinar-setup)*

[webinars@asist.org](mailto:webinars@asist.org)

*A copy of the recording, handouts and a follow-up survey will be  
available within 48 hours.*

000111010101110001001  
10101010100001111010101  
00000111011010101000111  
0101101001010110101010  
101111010101011010001  
110101101011111011101  
10111011110100001010  
110101101010101010111  
101010101010110010101  
01 Arts & Humanities 01  
10 10  
110111000001010101010

#VISitAH

*asis&t*