Finding Aid to the Brøderbund Software, Inc. Collection

Summary Information

Title: Brøderbund Software, Inc. collection
Creator: Douglas Carlston and Brøderbund Software, Inc. (primary)
ID: 114.892
Date: 1979-2002 (inclusive); 1980-1998 (bulk)
Extent: approx. 8 cubic feet
Language: The materials in this collection are in English, unless otherwise indicated.
Abstract: The Brøderbund Software, Inc. collection is a compilation of Brøderbund business records and information on the Software Publishers Association (SPA). The majority of the materials are dated between 1980 and 1998.
Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.
Custodial History: The Brøderbund Software, Inc. collection was donated to The Strong in January 2014 as a gift from Douglas Carlston. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 114.892. The papers were received from Carlston in 5 boxes, along with a donation of Brøderbund software products and related corporate ephemera.
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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Carlston, Cathy
- Carlston, Doug, 1947-
- Carlston, Gary
- Pelczarski, Mark
- Wasch, Ken
- Williams, Ken

Corporate Names

- Brøderbund
- Brøderbund Software, Inc.

- Electronic Arts (Firm)
- Mattel, Inc.
- Penguin Software
- Sierra On-Line, Inc.
- Software Publishers Association
- SPA (Association)
- StarCraft
- The Learning Company

Subjects

- Brøderbund
- Carmen Sandiego (Game)
- Computer adventure games
- Computer games
- Computer games industry
- Electronic games industry
- Game design and development
- Games--software
- Print shop (Computer file)
- Print shop deluxe (Computer file)
- Simulation games
- Software Publishers Association

Historical Note

Brøderbund Software, Inc. was founded in 1980 by brothers Douglas and Gary Carlston in Eugene, Oregon. The name "Brøderbund" was reportedly a portmanteau of the Scandinavian "*brøder*" (meaning "brother") and the German "*bund*" (meaning "alliance").

Douglas ("Doug") Carlston, a lawyer and computer programmer, coded a series of games called the *Galactic Saga*, which achieved modest commercial success via outside software publishers. In 1979, Doug and Gary Carlston decided to start their own software company. Thanks to an early investment from family and friends, the Carlston brothers marketed the *Galactic Saga* directly to retailers. They formed a distribution deal with Japanese software company StarCraft to sell additional home entertainment software stateside. The Carlstons' sister, Cathy, joined Brøderbund in 1981, the same year in which the company was incorporated in California.

Brøderbund soon expanded its operations to include in-house game designers and programmers creating both entertainment and educational software across a variety of home computer platforms. Some of Brøderbund's most popular titles in the early 1980s included *Choplifter* (1982), *Lode Runner* (1983), and desktop publisher *Print Shop* (1984). In 1985, Brøderbund developed the sensationally popular *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*, a geography- and history-based educational game. Additional software titles in the *Carmen Sandiego* series were published over the years, and the massive success of the series spawned television shows and choose-your-own-adventure books.

Brøderbund continued to grow in both wealth and status in the software industry, shifting its production from floppy disks to CD-ROMs in the early 1990s. Critics hailed *Myst*, created by Cyan and published by Brøderbund in 1993, as a groundbreaking 3-D graphic adventure game. During the mid-1990s, Brøderbund actively sought out mergers and acquisitions. The diverse computer platforms available to consumers resulted in the production of more Brøderbund software titles and versions than ever before.

In 1998, The Learning Company purchased Brøderbund and immediately terminated more than 500 former Brøderbund employees. Mattel acquired The Learning Company a year later, and subsequent transactions effectively rendered the original Brøderbund defunct. As of 2014, Encore Software, Inc. licenses the Broderbund (with a standard letter "o" instead of the Danish symbol "ø") line of products.

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection contains a grouping of corporate records from Brøderbund Software, Inc. Document types in the first series include correspondence, meeting minutes, publicity materials, memos, sales reports, financial information, product development notes, news articles, software diskettes, artwork, photographs, conference programs, internal newsletters, and other reference materials. Two large bound scrapbooks of publicity and product information are also part of this collection. Most of the materials are dated between 1980 and 1998, the duration of Brøderbund's existence under Doug Carlston. The second series in this collection showcases Carlston's involvement in the early years of the Software Publishers Association (SPA). Additional scope and content information can be found in the "Contents List" section of this finding aid.

The Brøderbund Software, Inc. collection is arranged into two series, both of which have been further divided into subseries. The collection is housed in fourteen archival document boxes.

Related Materials

Various Brøderbund product catalogs, strategy guides, and choose-your-own-adventure books are housed in the library stacks of the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong.

Hundreds of software titles from Brøderbund, as well as their accompanying manuals, are held in The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic Games (ICHEG). The majority of these materials were donated to the museum by Doug Carlston in the same accession lot.

System of Arrangement

Series I: Brøderbund corporate records, 1979-2002
- Subseries A: Historical information
- Subseries B: Correspondence
- Subseries C: Financial information
- Subseries D: Product development
- Subseries E: Sales and marketing
- Subseries F: Personnel information
- Subseries G: Internal newsletters
- Subseries H: News clippings and publicity
- Subseries I: Box/packaging art clippings
- Subseries J: Miscellaneous papers and diskettes

Series II: Software Publishers Association (SPA), 1984-1991
- Subseries A: Board and membership
- Subseries B: Correspondence
- Subseries C: Newsletters
- Subseries D: Conference information
- Subseries E: Other documentation

Contents List

Series I: Brøderbund corporate records, 1979-2002

Subseries A: Historical information

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains a variety of documentation on the history of Brøderbund, including product lists and release dates, staffing information, and corporate acquisition possibilities. Box 1, Folder 2 holds copies of documents annotated by Doug Carlston as being "company firsts," such as Brøderbund's first sale, first check, first letterhead, and more.

Box 1

Folder 1 Brøderbund executive management bios, c. 1980s-1995
Folder 2 Brøderbund historic "firsts," denoted by Doug Carlston, 1980-1983
Folder 3 Brøderbund "Personnel Manual," December 1981
Folder 4 Brøderbund organizational charts, September 1982 and February 1983
Folder 5 Future Computing seminar agenda and report by Doug Carlston, 1982
Folder 6 Brøderbund products - historical release, alphabetical order, July 27, 1987
Folder 7 Brøderbund products - historical release, alphabetical and chronological orders, August 16, 1988
Folder 8 Brøderbund products - historical release, chronological order, November 30, 1994
Folder 9 Brøderbund products - historical release, alphabetical and chronological orders, February 28, 1995
Folder 10 Brøderbund products - historical release, alphabetical order, May 30, 1997
Folder 11 Brøderbund products - historical release, chronological order, May 30, 1997
Folder 12 Founders' Day Dinner program, March 3, 1984
Folder 13 Brøderbund Business Plan, 1985
Folder 14 Company move information, 1985
Folder 15 Brøderbund 1985 Strategic Plan, meeting agendas, notes, ideas, and final plan, 1985
Folder 16 Brøderbund 1986 Strategic Plan, meeting agendas, notes, ideas, and final plan, 1986
Folder 17 Brøderbund corporate retreat proposal, reference and correspondence, 1986
Folder 18 Brøderbund office floor plans, n.d.

Box 2

Folder 1 Brøderbund and Origin Systems, Inc., correspondence and agreements, 1985-1987
Folder 2 Brøderbund acquisition possibilities - Micro Education Corporation of American (MECA), 1986-1988
Folder 3 Brøderbund acquisition possibilities - Monarch Avalon, Inc., 1987
Folder 4 Brøderbund acquisition possibilities - Sierra On-Line, Inc., 1987
Folder 5 Brøderbund merger proposal templates, n.d.
Folder 6 Sensei backgrounder, company information, n.d.
Folder 7 Brøderbund Japan company profile, 1987
Folder 8 Brøderbund Japan trip - memos, notes, and itinerary, 1987
Folder 9 Brøderbund Trademark Policy, copyright information, and related information, 1996-1998

Folder 10 Brøderbund corporate growth presentation slides and notes, 1995
Folder 11 The Learning Company corporate presentation and Annual Report, 1998
Folder 12 Reference materials and miscellaneous, n.d.

Subseries B: Correspondence
Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses business correspondence, mainly between staff at Brøderbund and other software companies. Of interest is the file folder of "threatening letters," received by Brøderbund staff from a single sender in 1995. Other letters include discussions of acquisitions, exporting and licensing Brøderbund games to foreign markets, and collaboration on products.

Box 3
Folder 1 Early Brøderbund correspondence, 1979-1981
Folder 2 Correspondence with Star Craft, Inc., export licenses, and agreements, 1982-1983
Folder 3 Correspondence with Computerre, c. 1982-1983 [some French]
Folder 4 Correspondence with IRS, 1983
Folder 5 Correspondence with Softalk Publishing Co., 1983
Folder 6 Correspondence with Penguin Software/Mark Pelczarski, 1983-1986
Folder 7 Correspondence with Richard Bolles, 1984
Folder 8 Customer comment card from Steve Wozniak, 1984
Folder 9 International transmissions, 1986-1987
Folder 10 Correspondence with American Interactive Media, 1987
Folder 11 Correspondence with IREM Corporation (Nintendo Printer/Plotter), 1987
Folder 12 Correspondence with Kyodai Software, 1988-1990
Folder 13 Correspondence with Dick Ruopp, 1990
Folder 14 Correspondence from consumers, 1994-1996
Folder 15 "Threatening letters, filed 5/5/95," 1995
Folder 16 Letter from McGraw-Hill about *High Score: The Illustrated History of Electronic Games*, 2002
Folder 17 Various internal and external letters, 1982-1996 and n.d.

Subseries C: Financial information
Scope and Content Note: Within this subseries are monthly/annual financial reports, statements, board meeting minutes, stock information, and more. The shareholder reports (in Box 4, Folder 2) address the early investors in Brøderbund personally and are much more casual than later financial reports. Monthly reports from 1985-1987 are comprehensive and detail Brøderbund product orders, departmental income, and licensee information.

Box 4
Folder 1 Brøderbund early financial reports, 1980-1983
Folder 2 Brøderbund shareholders' quarterly reports, 1980-1984
Folder 3 Brøderbund board meeting minutes, agendas, resolutions, and related documents, 1982
Folder 4 Brøderbund financial statements, inception (September 24, 1981) to August 31, 1982, Arthur Young, 1982
Folder 5 Brøderbund 1982 Series A Preferred Stock Financing, September 20, 1982
Folder 6 Brøderbund incentive stock option information, 1982-1983

Folder 7 Brøderbund compensation resolutions, 1983
Folder 8 *Corporate Record* for Brøderbund, NASDAQ, 1983
Folder 9 Brøderbund board meeting minutes, agendas, resolutions, and related documents, 1983-1984
Folder 10 Brøderbund and Guild Mortgage, notes, financial information, correspondence, non-disclosure agreements, and loan application, 1983-1984

Box 5
Folder 1 Brøderbund financial reports, 1983-1985
Folder 2 Brøderbund board meeting minutes, agendas, resolutions, and related documents, 1985-1986
Folder 3 Kuechmann stock trust, 1986
Folder 4 Brøderbund financial reports, fiscal year 1986, 1985-1986
Folder 5 Brøderbund monthly reports, September-December 1985
Folder 6 Brøderbund monthly reports, January-April 1986
Folder 7 Brøderbund monthly reports, May-August 1986
Folder 8 Brøderbund monthly reports, September-December 1986

Box 6
Folder 1 Brøderbund monthly reports, January-April 1987
Folder 2 Brøderbund monthly reports, May-August 1987
Folder 3 Brøderbund preliminary stock prospectus, April 10, 1987
Folder 4 Brøderbund financial reports, fiscal years 1987-1988, 1986-1988
Folder 5 Brøderbund Annual Reports, 1992-1993
Folder 6 Sensei Software financial statements, 1994-1996
Folder 7 *SPA Resource Guide - A Tool for Developing Your Software Business*, n.d.

Subseries D: Product development
Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses a sample of product design notes, ideas, artwork, and plans maintained by the Product Development department at Brøderbund.

Box 7
Folder 1 Brøderbund original box artwork, c. early 1980s [includes *Apple Panic*, *Galactic Saga*, and *Space Warrior*]
Folder 2 Softalk bestsellers lists, 1980-1983
Folder 3 Product charts, 1982
Folder 4 Product design notes, 1983
Folder 5 Brøderbund "Information for Authors" booklet with non-disclosure agreements, 1983
Folder 6 Educational software product ideas, 1984
Folder 7 Various software idea submissions, 1984-1993
Folder 8 *Communicate* product development notes, memos, pricing, reference, and diskettes, 1985
Folder 9 Product design schedule and development plan, 1986-1987
Folder 10 Multi-media product ideas, 1988
Folder 11 Storytelling product ideas, design specifications, and correspondence, 1990

Folder 12 Various software product ideas and notes, 1990-1994
Folder 13 On-line services ideas and notes, 1990, 1995
Folder 14 Mudding (Multi-User Dungeons) ideas and notes, 1992
Folder 15 Virtual worlds product ideas, 1994
Folder 16 *Alien Tales* production notes and schedule, 1995
Folder 17 On-line publishing ideas and notes, 1996
Folder 18 Brøderbund "Authors Wanted" information, n.d.

Box 12
Object 3 Brøderbund "Authors Wanted" mounted poster, n.d.

Subseries E: Sales and marketing
Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains trade sheets, advertising and product release schedules, and sales information from the Marketing and Sales departments at Brøderbund. The two large flat albums in Box 12 contain clippings of publicity, product catalogs, software reviews, product artwork, and more. Box 11 holds a cylindrical kit from the Brøderbund Kids' Club (c. 1992), featuring a membership card, sunglasses, a pencil, a pin, a Velcro wrist pocket pack, a coupon for Brøderbund products, and an activity book.

Box 8
Folder 1 Early Brøderbund product announcements/trade sheets, 1980-1983
Folder 2 Brøderbund product price lists, 1982-1996
Folder 3 Brøderbund "Outstanding Products" sheet, 1983-1984
Folder 4 User group presentation, memo, and diskettes, 1984
Folder 5 Brøderbund product release schedule, 1986
Folder 6 "The Brøderbund News" consumer newsletter, Fall 1985
Folder 7 Marketing, Sales, Product Development (MPD) meeting notes, 1986
Folder 8 Sales department - Bill Holt, sales trip information, notes, dealer/distributor data, 1986
Folder 9 Sales department - Rosanne Kramer, sales trip information and notes, 1986
Folder 10 Sales department status report, April 1986
Folder 11 Sales department - "Consumer Electronics Show, June 1-4, 1986 - Statistical Analysis Report," Sher Ripley, May 1986
Folder 12 Brøderbund dealer counter card/sales information, July 1986
Folder 13 Brøderbund advertising schedule, Fall 1986
Folder 14 Brøderbund Value Priced Products booklet, 1987
Folder 15 "Carmen Strikes Again!" products booklet, 1988
Folder 16 Brøderbund released products list, 1993
Folder 17 Brøderbund Employee Price List, 1997

Box 11
Object 1 Brøderbund Kids' Club membership kit, c. 1992

Box 12

Object 1 Large flat album (13" x 15"), public relations and marketing information/clippings, 1986

Object 2 Large flat album (16" x 18"), public relations and marketing information/clippings, 1981-1984

Subseries F: Personnel information

Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses sample employee staffing information from 1984-1986. Two folders of employee headshots, a group photograph, and slides from Brøderbund's appearance at a trade show are also part of this subseries. (For photographs of executive management, please see Subseries A, Box 1.)

Box 8

Folder 18 Brøderbund employee and department lists, 1984-1985

Folder 19 Brøderbund employee performance reviews - template and sample reviews, 1985

Folder 20 Brøderbund new hire announcement memos, n.d.

Folder 21 Brøderbund non-disclosure agreement templates, 1984-1986

Folder 22 Brøderbund employee personal/vacation day memos, 1985

Folder 23 Brøderbund programmer staff headshots - photographs and negatives, n.d. [Includes Ken Bull, Lauren Elliot, Danny Gorlin, Gene Portwood, Scott Shumway, and David Snider]

Folder 24 Brøderbund staff photographs/slides, unlabeled, n.d.

Subseries G: Internal newsletters

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains company-produced internal Brøderbund newsletters, with the bulk of them dated from 1982-1986. Issues of the *Brøderbund Crown* include department news, extracurricular activity announcements, staff information, essays, recipes, jokes, games, and parody articles.

Box 9

Folder 1 Brøderbund "earliest newsletter," November 1982

Folder 2 *The Brøderbund Crown* newsletter, Vol. 1, Issues 1-5, 1983

Folder 3 *The Brøderbund Crown* newsletter, Vol. 2, Issues 1-3, 1984

Folder 4 *The Brøderbund Crown* newsletter, Vol. 3, Issues 1-5, 1985

Folder 5 *The Brøderbund Crown* newsletter, Vol. 4, March 1986

Folder 6 *Brøderbund Sales Talk* newsletter, 1986

Folder 7 *The Brøderbund Education Forum*, Issue No. 1: Special Education, 1989

Folder 8 *Brødernews* newsletter, Spring 1994

Folder 9 Various other company newsletters, 1981-1998

Subseries H: News clippings and publicity

Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds news articles featuring Brøderbund. (For additional news articles and publicity information, see also the flat album scrapbooks in Subseries E, Box 12.)

Box 9

Folder 10 Brøderbund-related news articles, 1981-2001

Subseries I: Box/packaging art clippings
Scope and Content Note: Within this subseries are 30 clippings from boxes or packaging of Brøderbund-created or -distributed software products, dated between 1980 and 1988. (For complete product packaging, please see the Brøderbund Software collection of the International Center for the History of Electronic Games at The Strong.)

Box 10

Folder 1 Brøderbund Software clipped box/packaging art, c. 1980-1988

Subseries J: Miscellaneous papers and diskettes
Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses miscellaneous Brøderbund-related papers and unpublished diskettes.

Box 10

Folder 2 "A Marin Year" 1988 Brøderbund calendar, photographs by Martin Schweitzer, 1988

Folder 3 Company trip ideas, 1991

Folder 4 "Where in the World of Music is Carmen Sandiego?" Marin Symphony Family Concert flyer, February 1, 1997

Folder 5 Doug Carlston notebook/scratchpad, n.d.

Folder 6 Various draft software diskettes, n.d.; envelope contains:

- "Atari ST Artwork (2) SS Gregory Hammond 4/17/87" [hard disk]
- "Brøderbund Adventure Generator" [2 diskettes in one envelope]
- "Adventure text generator"
- "Trailmobile workfile"

Box 11

Object 2 Plastic diskette holder labeled "Production Masters and other extremely important disks," containing:

- "Seafox copy master with title finished"
- "Star Blazer copy program"
- "Labyrinth matter copy program CD copy disk"
- "Track Attack production 6/8/82"
- "Choplifter 4/28/82 MAIN 2 Replacement for bug fix"
- "Apple Panic Atari Version DOS II 2/22/82"
- "RDOS Utilities copyright 1981 Roland Gustafsson"
- "Star Blazer finished copy" (for one RAM card)
- "Apple Panic production 03/25/82" (2 disks)
- "Apple Panic production 03/12/82 Atari" (2 disks)
- "Labyrinth Master copy 2 program disk"
- "Brøderbund Protection System Master 1-5-82"
- "Track Attack copy program back-up v2"
- "Track Attack copy program v2 2-2-82"

Object 3 Plastic diskette holder labeled "DB Master Files," containing:

- "Utilities"
- [Unlabeled]
- "No. 33"
- "Tawala's Last Redoubt writings"
- "Tawala's Last Redoubt"
- "Tawala's Last Redoubt backup"
- "Apple Master Protected Copy Program 11/11/80"

Series II: Software Publishers Association (SPA), 1984-1991

Subseries A: Board and membership

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains membership information and reports compiled by the board members of the Software Publishers Association (SPA) between 1984 and 1988.

Box 13

Folder 1 Doug Carlston SPA materials, 1984
Folder 2 SPA Bylaws, adopted June 1984, modified March 1985
Folder 3 SPA membership lists and directories, 1984-1988
Folder 4 SPA membership application forms (blank), 1984 and n.d.
Folder 5 SPA nomination forms and ballots, 1984-1987
Folder 6 SPA financial statements and budget analyses, 1984-1986
Folder 7 SPA software sales reports, 1984-1988

Subseries B: Correspondence

Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds board meeting minutes and agendas, business correspondence, and announcements to members of SPA.

Box 13

Folder 8 SPA board members correspondence, meeting agendas, minutes, and other documentation, 1983-1986
Folder 9 SPA board members correspondence, meeting agendas, minutes, and other documentation, 1987-1988
Folder 10 SPA members correspondence, 1983-1984

Box 14

Folder 1 SPA members correspondence, 1985
Folder 2 SPA members correspondence, 1986-1991

Subseries C: Newsletters

Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses some of the member newsletters published by SPA between 1984 and 1988. Features of each issue include SPA projects, essays, market trends, information on Congressional legislation, and member spotlights.

Box 14

Folder 3 *SPA News* newsletters, 1984-1988

Subseries D: Conference information
Scope and Content Note: Within this subseries is information on several of the first SPA-sponsored conferences between 1985 and 1988.

Box 14

Folder 4	SPA First Annual Conference, September 12-15, 1985, Alexandria, Virginia, materials and information, 1985
Folder 5	SPA 1985 Conference photographs, 1985
Folder 6	SPA Spring Symposium, April 16-19, 1986, San Francisco, California, materials and information, 1986
Folder 7	SPA Second Annual Conference, September 28-October 1, 1986, Alexandria, Virginia, conference program, 1986
Folder 8	SPA Spring Symposium, March 25-28, 1987, Berkeley, California, materials and information, 1987
Folder 9	SPA Spring Symposium, March 27-30, 1988, Berkeley, California, conference brochure, 1988

Subseries E: Other documentation
Scope and Content Note: This subseries holds information on a computer warranty bill, a SPA-sponsored award to Brøderbund, and miscellaneous news clippings and advertisements about SPA.

Box 14

Folder 10	California State Senate Insurance, Claims, and Corporation Committee - Interim Hearing on Computer Warranties, AB 1507, October 1985
Folder 11	SPA Gold Award Certification to Brøderbund for *Karateka,* 1986
Folder 12	Miscellaneous SPA-related news clippings, advertisements, and other information, 1984-1987