of too small a market by focusing on high school Advance Placement (AP) history as the subject matter. As a result, the project struggled to identify a sustainable target market. Was it AP history teachers, or their school districts? Was it textbook publishers? Or was it the students themselves? *The More We Know* discusses high-profile meetings between power players at major institutions who had immense resources at their disposal, a situation most educators dealing with shoestring budgets will never experience. As with iCue itself, this might be less a criticism and more a regret that with a slight shift in focus, the book could be more relevant to a much broader audience.

This does not prevent *The More We Know* from being an interesting and important book, and it is well worth reading for anyone interested in the intersection of media, technology, and the future of education. The final chapter, which distills the lessons learned, will be particularly valuable for those contemplating their own ventures into innovative educational approaches. This is especially important at a time when topics such as gamification and online learning interest both academics and a software industry seeking to prompt—and profit from—an educational revolution. *The More We Know* encourages such partnerships but underscores the importance of being aware of the web of competing interests involved and of proceeding with caution.

—Trent Hergenrader, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI*

The Future Was Here: The Commodore Amiga
Jimmy Maher
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012. Contents, notes, index, glossary, bibliography. 344 pp. $26.95 paper. ISBN: 9780262017206

Codename Revolution: The Nintendo Wii Platform
Steven E. Jones and George K. Thiruvathukal
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012. Contents, notes, bibliography, index. 216 pp. $24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780262016803

As the second and third titles in the Platform Studies series from MIT Press, *The Future Was Here* (2012) by Jimmy Maher and *Codename Revolution* (2012) by Steven E. Jones and George K. Thiruvathukal continue the series beyond the launch title coauthored by its editors, Ian Bogost and Nick Montfort. In their *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System* (2009), Bogost and Montfort advanced a critical approach to historicizing the Atari VCS by reading the relationships among its technical affordances and influence on and by human culture. These latest titles share this fundamental interest in the links involving the artifacts produced on a platform, the technology involved, and the culture that surrounds both. But the chronological and thematic breadth of the works under review also demonstrate that the Platform Studies approach can provide insight both to older systems as well as emerging situations of play. *The Future Was Here* will be of greatest value to those wishing to learn a good deal about an important transitional system, the Commodore Amiga (produced

from 1985 through the mid-1990s), and *Codename Revolution* will interest those following shifts in the social contexts of play that are accompanying new motion-controlled gaming paradigms. In other words, while *The Future Was Here* takes a deeper look into the system itself, the scope of *Codename Revolution* is broader, using a rigorous analysis of the Wii as a social platform to support the argument that "all platforms are social platforms."

In its focus on an older system, Maher's *The Future Was Here* is more like its predecessor. What Maher's book may lack in theoretical nuance or writerly expertise, it makes up in technical precision and clarity. Maher provides a thorough and admirably accessible account of the Amiga's unique chip set, architecture, and key software all in support of his central claim that the Amiga comprised a revolution in multimedia personal computing, one which—despite its promise—never realized the market it was due. In making and repeating this claim that Commodore mishandled the Amiga, Maher risks seeming an evangelist, but this criticism of Commodore's corporate structure helps illuminate the volatile gaming and personal computing industries during this crucial period.

Maher's first three chapters following his introduction delinates the unique properties of Amiga by closely analyzing and partially re-creating its famous "Boing demo," its influential Deluxe Paint software series, and a pair of three-dimensional image-editing tools. In a discussion that some readers may find esoteric at times, Maher unpacks the Amiga layer by planar-graphic layer, with special attention to Amiga's cleverly engineered graphics

abilities. To his credit, Maher explains programming concepts while using very little code. Some examples (those that deal in color, especially) are greatly helped, however, by the examples he provides through an accompanying website. Subsequent chapters on the AmigoOS software and the role of Amiga in CGI effects generation (for Max Headroom and Babylon 5, notably) are important in establishing the cultural presence of Amiga beyond the personal computing industry, but chapters 7 and 8 may be of greatest value to a scholar of play. Examining in turn Europe's demoscene subculture (which specializes in producing demos) and some platform-specific game programming techniques, these later chapters are the closest Maher comes to the cultural side of Platform Studies. Each of these topics— while already fascinating and technically thorough in Maher's explication—might have merited further expansion.

Jones and Thiruvathukal face a different challenge in their *Codename Revolution*. While many readers may be unfamiliar with Amiga, most will know of—and probably own—a Nintendo Wii. The authors' task is to take something familiar and help their readers understand it in new ways. They do this not by alienation, that is, by making the familiar strange, but by shifting their focus slightly outward from the technical components of the console itself. While the book contains a healthy and relevant discussion of engineering and industrial design, *Codename Revolution*'s central claim is that, in considering the Wii as a "social platform," the space that matters most for analysis are the ludic boundaries of the system. For Wii, these are the culturally situated,

mostly domestic spaces of play where somatics become semantic. This textual orientation—no doubt owing to Jones's background as a textual scholar—places *Codename Revolution* more resolutely on the theoretical side of Platform Studies as the authors draw frequently from scholars as diverse as Jesper Juul, Johan Huizinga, and Gerard Genette.

Codename Revolution's other main strength is the authors' thorough but judiciously implemented background information on the Wii's development and design. Drawing on published interviews with key figures at Nintendo and third-party developers, Jones and Thiruvathukal demonstrate that Wii's innovation in developing the social contexts of play derive logically from Nintendo's core design ethos of doing more with less: "lateral uses of existing technology." In this way, the Wiimote and Balance Board (discussed in chapters 3 and 4 respectively) are significant for their simplicity and ultimately for what they mean for play—not, as one might expect of their power-driven competitors, for their computational achievement. Indeed, as the authors point out, the basic engineering principles at work in the Wiimote are the same as the light guns that have been part of home console gaming since the 1970s. What becomes revolutionary about the Wii, therefore, is the way its games make use of that most important accessory, the player's body.

As technical platforms, the Nintendo Wii and the Commodore Amiga have in common an ability to inspire creativity and play through the cleverness or innovation of their design, as opposed to the power of the processing abilities. Together, these two books carry the Platform Studies book series into its critical sophomore phase through accessible, innovative writing about technology. More than simple historical accounts, both books—like the platforms they analyze—work best when the cleverness of their authors and their discoveries come to the foreground. And both are valuable, though differently balanced, contributions to the current academic discourse on games and play.

—Zach Whalen, *University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA*