

Finding Aid to the Joshua Marks Papers, 1984-1997

Summary Information

Title: Joshua Marks papers

Creator: Joshua Marks (primary)

ID: 121.285

Date: 1984-1997 (inclusive)

Extent: 2.25 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Joshua Marks papers are a compilation of documentation relating to Marks' roles at The Learning Company and Electronic Arts. Materials include notes, memos, reports, newsletters, project development documentation, market research materials, and more. The materials are dated between 1984 and 1997.

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 intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) have not been transferred, The Strong has permission to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Conditions Governing Access: Digital files migrated from 3.5" floppy disks and data tapes in this collection are available to on-site researchers only. Please see The Strong's Digital Games Files Access Policy.

Custodial History: The Joshua Marks papers were donated to The Strong in December 2020 as a gift of Joshua and Lisa Marks. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 121.285. The papers were received from Joshua Marks along with hundreds of computer games and video games under Activity ID 14463.

Preferred citation for publication: Joshua Marks papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

Processed by: Julia Novakovic, April-May 2022

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Marks, Joshua

Corporate Names

- Electronic Arts (Firm)
- Raya Systems (Firm)
- The Learning Company

Subjects

- Computer adventure games
- Computer games
- Computer games -- Design
- Computer games -- Development
- Computer games industry
- Educational games -- Software
- Game design and development
- Game Developers Conference
- Games -- Software
- Music video games
- Rock music -- Computer games
- Simulation games
- Super Mario Bros. 3 (Computer game)
- Video games -- Design
- Video games industry

Biographical Note

Joshua Marks is an American technology professional with more than three decades in the software and technology industries. He earned his B.A. in Mathematics from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1986. Soon after, Marks was hired as the 20th employee at The Learning Company, where he helped to develop early educational games (such as *Reader Rabbit* and the *Super Solvers* series) from concept through release. Marks later joined Electronic Arts as a Senior Producer in 1992, working on game development and brand identity. He left the video game industry to work in emerging technologies and e-learning. In 2006, Marks co-founded Curriki.org, a non-profit source for open educational resources.

As of 2022, Marks is a Senior Advisor at Public Consulting Group, where he directs open learning technology solutions across educational and professional development sectors.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Joshua Marks papers contain documentation compiled by Marks during his positions at The Learning Company and Electronic Arts. Materials in this collection include game development files, notes, memos, newsletters, reports, market research files, reference, and more.

The Joshua Marks papers have been arranged into three series. The physical materials are housed in three archival document boxes and two media storage boxes. (Digital files from this collection are accessible on-site only.)

Related Materials

Along with this archival collection, Joshua Marks donated hundreds of computer games and video games to the International Center for the History of Electronic Games.

Published conference programs and proceedings from software development conferences are located in the library.

System of Arrangement

Series I: The Learning Company, 1984-1992

Series II: Electronic Arts, 1992-1995 and n.d.

Series III: Conferences, 1991-1997

Contents List

Series I: The Learning Company, 1984-1992

Scope and Content Note: This series contains documentation retained by Marks during his years working as a Senior Producer at The Learning Company.

Materials in this series include game concept documents, notes, memos, market research, reference, and more. Of note are the internal company newsletters (*The Picayune*) containing details about staff, projects, and other industry-related items of interest.

Box 1

- Folder 1 The Learning Company – “Design Guidelines Overview” document, 1984
- Folder 2 The Learning Company – *The Picayune* internal newsletter, Issues 1-8, 1986-1987
- Folder 3 The Learning Company – “Robot Odyssey Solutions” – notes, drawings, and design documentation; n.d. [c. 1984?]
- Folder 4 The Learning Company – “Mocket” – agenda, memos, updates, and notes; 1988-1990
- Folder 5 The Learning Company – “Math Mountain” [“Number Mountain,” “Number Hunt”] – concept outline, notes, and reference; 1989-1991 and n.d.
- Folder 6 The Learning Company – “SSR Mac Flow” – test cases, test specs, agreements, memos, and notes; 1989-1991 and n.d. [“Super Solvers: Midnight Rescue”?]
- Folder 7 The Learning Company – “SAM-CD Design Treatment” – overview, product structure, gameplay details, educational information, unit cartoon photocopies; 1989-1991 and n.d. [“Reader Rabbit,” “Sam the Lion”?]
- Folder 8 The Learning Company – “Roadways” – concept outline, n.d. [c. 1980s]
- Folder 9 The Learning Company – Market research files, memos, and reports; 1986-1992
- Folder 10 The Learning Company – Reference articles on software industry, 1986-1992 and n.d.
- Folder 11 The Learning Company – Miscellaneous papers, n.d. [c. 1980s]

Box 4

- Object 1 The Learning Company – Data tape: “Wednesday, Tape 1,” n.d. [3M DC600A data cartridge tape, 60 MB]
- Object 2 The Learning Company – Data tape: “\\S1 Tuesday B,” n.d. [3M DC 6150 data cartridge tape]
- Object 3 The Learning Company – Data tape: “\\S2 Wednesday B,” n.d. [3M DC 6150 data cartridge tape, 150 MB]
- Object 4 The Learning Company – Data tape: “\\BART Friday 10-4-91,” 1991 [3M DC 6250 data cartridge tape, 250 MB]

Series II: Electronic Arts, 1992-1995 and n.d.

Scope and Content Note: This series holds documentation retained by Marks during his years working as a Senior Producer at Electronic Arts. Materials in this series include game concept documents, notes, memos, market research, reference, audiovisual materials, and more.

Of interest to researchers may be the [id Software PC port of *Super Mario Bros. 3*](#), found on one of the floppy disks in Folder 6. These imaged files can be accessed by on-site researchers in a read-only capacity.

Box 2

- Folder 1 Electronic Arts – “EA Script Outline” – template, n.d. [c. 1990s?]
- Folder 2 Electronic Arts – “Game Script Outline” – template, 1992
- Folder 3 Electronic Arts – “Project Technical Development Document” – template, n.d. [c. 1990s?]
- Folder 4 Electronic Arts – “Technical Design Review” – template, 1993
- Folder 5 Electronic Arts – “An Artist’s Review of a Technical Design Review” – information sheet, n.d. [c. 1993?]
- Folder 6 Electronic Arts – Raya Systems letters, 3.5” floppy disks, and reference; 1993 [3.5” floppy disks contain “Rex Ronan/ Bronkie” and “Super Mario 3/ Space Pizza/ Shadow Knights/ Slordax”] [Note: Disks have been imaged and are accessible to on-site researchers only.]
- Folder 7 Electronic Arts – “3DO Rave/ Video Rave” – proposals, design documentation, memos, reference, and notes; 1993-1995
- Folder 8 Electronic Arts – “The Aerosmithsonian” – game treatment, memos, notes, and reference about Aerosmith; 1993-1994
- Folder 9 Electronic Arts – “Commotion Music Box” – game proposal, correspondence, and notes; 1993-1994
- Folder 10 Electronic Arts – “Digital DJ” – project proposal, memo, and agreement; 1994
- Folder 11 Electronic Arts – “Virtual Nightclub” – design document, memos, demo disk, and game information; 1994
- Folder 12 Electronic Arts – “1994 Interactive Media Agreement between AFTRA and EA,” 1994

Box 3

- Folder 1 Electronic Arts – “E-GEMS” [Electronic Games in Education for Math and Science] project – research, notes, reports, reference, and memos; 1993-1995
- Folder 2 Electronic Arts – Market research files – reference and notes, 1993-1995
- Folder 3 Electronic Arts – Reference articles [children’s software, video games, CD-ROMs], 1992-1995
- Folder 4 Electronic Arts – Reference articles from electronic gaming magazines, 1994

Box 5

- Object 1 Electronic Arts – VHS tape: “Raya Systems, Product Overview, © Raya Systems, approx. 10 mins,” n.d. [c. 1993]

- Object 2 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Cuckoo Zoo – 10/5/92, Jeff Hoover, Animal Sounds demo,” 1992
- Object 3 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Mahoney & Associates, Inc. Voice, and Sounds, 10/21/92,” 1992
- Object 4 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “EA Kids Music Search, Side 1, 12-14-92,” 1992
- Object 5 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Peter Pan 2-2-93,” 1993
- Object 6 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Cuckoo Zoo CD ROM Animal Character Recordings, 2/11/93,” 1993
- Object 7 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Edited CD-ROM speech, 2/23/93 / Jeff Gorilla,” 1993
- Object 8 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Jeff Hoover 3/10/93 3DO Ping/ Colby Paul – CD-ROM Female Area Sp. 3/10/93,” 1993
- Object 9 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “CD-ROM Additional Animal Speech, Colby Paul – Pig, Giraffe, Cow. 3/23/93 / Second Session: Jeff Hoover – Zebra, Gorilla, Walrus, 3/23/93,” 1993
- Object 10 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “CD ROM Additional Speech #2, SMA Edited Tape, 3/25/93,” 1993
- Object 11 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Video Jam 7/21/93 Rhodea & Messinger,” 1993
- Object 12 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Calypso King, Camel Breath, Video Jam 8/18/93,” 1993
- Object 13 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “EA Kids Dance Demo, 8/26/9-,” n.d. [1993?]
- Object 14 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Neil Ross – Narrator,” n.d.
- Object 15 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: “Multimedia Artists Sound Canvas Demo,” n.d.
- Object 16 Electronic Arts – Audiocassette: [no writing on label], n.d.

Series III: Conferences, 1991-1997

Scope and Content Note: In this series are notes, reference, and ephemera relating to software development conferences attended by Marks. (Published conference programs and proceedings from CGDC 1991-1997 have been transferred to the library.)

Box 3

- Folder 5 Conferences – CGDC ephemera and reference, 1991
- Folder 6 Conferences – CGDC ephemera and reference, 1992
- Folder 7 Conferences – Joshua Marks’ program and notes from 1992 Apple Worldwide Developers Conference, 1992
- Folder 8 Conferences – CGDC poll results, 1993
- Folder 9 Conferences – CGDC 1995 – invitations, brochures, ephemera, and reference; 1994-1995
- Folder 10 Conferences – CGDC notes, 1995
- Folder 11 Conferences – CGDC ephemera and reference, 1996-1997