Politics of Walking: Queer Movements through Space and Time" introduces the ideas of queer temporality and queer spatiality which refer to a tempo of play that resists chrononormativity. Ruberg points to both the practice of speed running and the genre of walking simulators as instances in which these temporal conventions are subverted.

I cannot overstate the importance of the contribution that this book makes to both queer studies and game studies. With this text queer people can reclaim a space for themselves within a culture that has often proven to be vitriolic and discriminatory. However, the strategies outlined in this book are so focused on facilitating close readings of games that literal representation of queer identities feels discounted. The spirit of this work is reflective of the labor, both emotional and physical, that queer people have done throughout history to create their own sense of belonging within a heteronormative society.

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Gaming the Iron Curtain: How Teenagers and Amateurs in Communist Czechoslovakia Claimed the Medium of Computer Games

Jaroslav Svelch
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018. Series foreword, preface, acknowledgments, a note on translations and pronunciation, introduction, appendix of important dates, glossary, notes, bibliography, and index. 315 pp.

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The first wave of affordable microcomputers that became available in the late 1970s and early 1980s changed the course of millions of lives: to have a real computer at home would have been unimaginable just a decade earlier. Many early enthusiasts look fondly back to those early days, and currently retro computing (games in particular), is more fashionable than ever. Colorful coffee table books evoking nostalgia lay at one end of the spectrum, but occupying the other are research papers and books that represent scholars' ongoing efforts to analyze the home computer era. Many of these accounts have been notably Americentric, or focused on other hotbeds of the gaming industry, such as Japan or the United Kingdom. Only relatively recently have authors started paying attention to so-called "local histories," expanding the geographical scope of the history of computing, and unearthing peculiarities specific to less-known hobbyist communities all over the world.

Jaroslav Svelch's *Gaming the Iron Curtain* is one of the few books that lets us peek into a very different time and place—namely communist Czechoslovakia of the 1980s, where a blooming computer culture emerged and grew in the shadow of a totalitarian regime. Fortunately the book is available in English, unlike several other interesting publications, thus making it available to a wider audience. It is hardly a surprise that the topic seems deeply personal to Svelch himself—judging by existing studies, researchers often focus on their own definitive years; former mainframe users study mainframes, home computer scholars were whiz kids of the 1980s, and so on. In the case of local his-

tories, personal experiences and, importantly, command of the regional language are assets that can be hard for an outsider to obtain.

Much of the literature about computing and digital games focuses on milestones, successful companies, and influential people. This approach inevitably simplifies the complexity of actual events, and omits the mundane, failed, or marginal. Svelch recognizes this problem and, instead, provides us with an exceptionally wide view of Czechoslovakia where ideological, political, cultural, and economic factors both hindered and facilitated the birth of the computer gaming hobby. In the West, you could simply walk into a store and buy a factory-made computer and games for it, but in a socialist economy such was not the case: the scarcity of resources, coupled with endless enthusiasm, led to creative solutions, *bricolage,* to overcome these obstacles. One notable theme Svelch sddresses is how the Iron Curtain was not quite as airtight as we might think. Western games were commonly circulated among hobbyists, and the preferred 8-bit computers—plus their local clones—to play them, also hailed from the West.

Approaching the fall of the Soviet Bloc, digital technology also became a means of resistance. Svelch describes how activists adopted the medium to deal with serious contemporary topics, such as police brutality against student demonstrators. Commercial games had scarcely been politically charged, perhaps apart from some British titles or games that used the Cold War as a setting. However, toward the end of the Soviet regime, Czechoslovakians used games as an alternative to state-controlled mass media. In the epilogue, the author bridges the gap between the past and the present with examples of how early computer culture influenced the later development of the regional information and communications technology industry.

The background study conducted for the book is convincing. Svelch has not relied only on personal accounts, digital artifacts, or contemporary texts: he has combined a variety of sources to build a bigger picture and provide explanations as to why things happened the way they did. The narrative flows naturally from one chapter to another, but they can also be read as distinct chapters. Although the book is an excellent example of academic research and analysis about game history, it is also an entertaining read. In addition to the printed publication, there is valuable online content available, such as videos and playable versions of the games mentioned. All in all, the book sets a good example for how to write similar local histories in the future, evading the common pitfalls seen in some earlier works and finding a balance between legibility and academic rigor.

—Markku Reunanen, *Aalto University, Espoo, Finland*