



## Official Gadgeteer Article: *Emulators for Pocket PCs: An Overview of the Best*

by [Henry Kong](#)

Last date revised: 03/06/2001



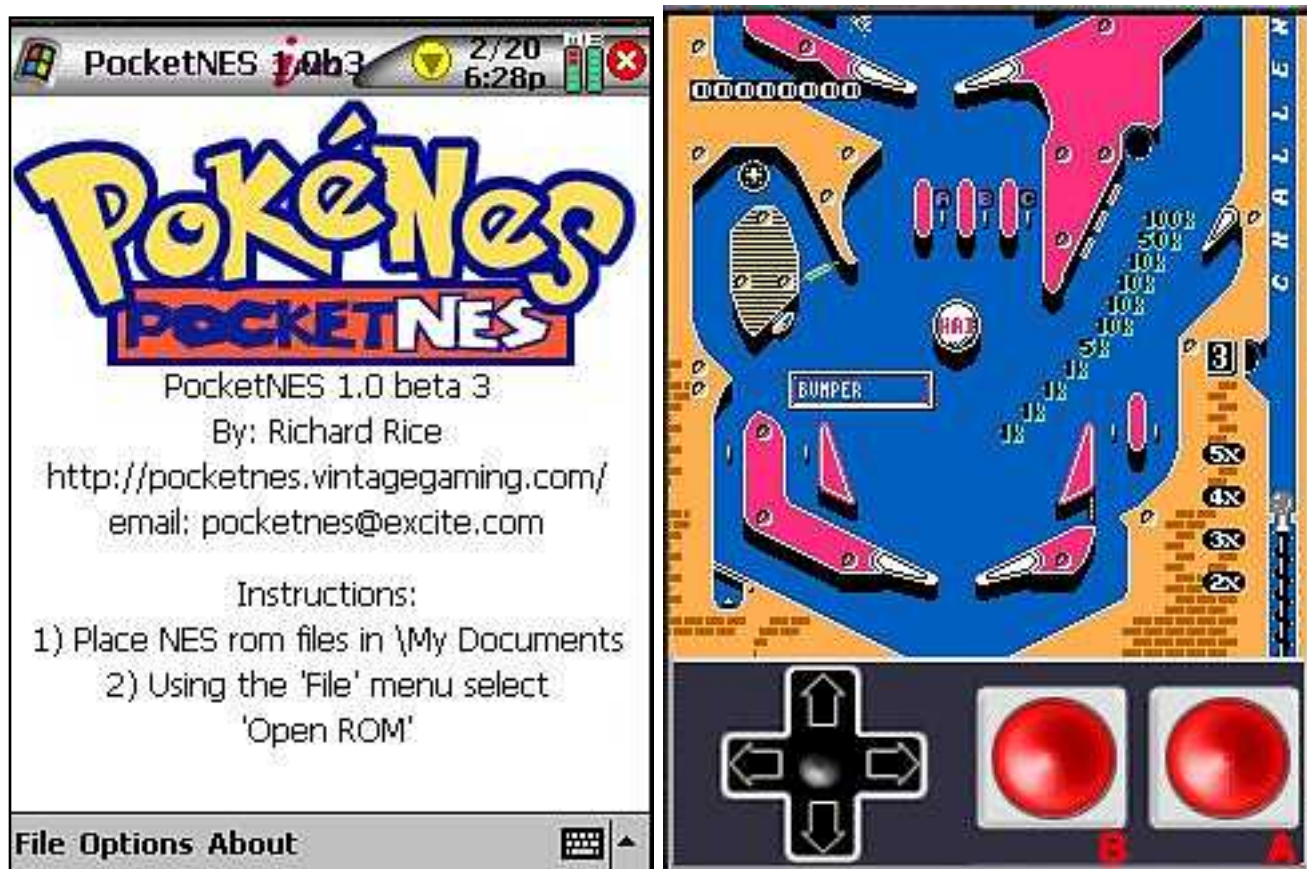
Game emulators are great fun. It's not only the tons of money that they save you on the purchase price, but that they also bring back retro, classic game play to today's Pocket PCs. On top of these obvious advantages, there are also: No repair bills, no need to hunt for hard-to-get spare parts and no required shelf space.

Emulators have contributed much pleasure to my life, and have motivated me to surf the web for retro games, got me interested in PDAs (the first Palm Pilot came with 4 nice retro games, remember?) and got me to upgrade to the iPAQ, which I feel is the only PDA that does justice to emulators.

This article will focus on several game emulators that are currently running on Pocket PCs at full speed - with sound and all kinds of good stuff. I have used the iPAQ as the benchmark for these programs, since it is the fastest and most compatible Pocket PC currently available. All comments are purely my personal opinions.

## The Most Compatible

In my humble opinion, [PockeNes](#) is the best of the breed. Almost 95% of all ROMs run on this emulator. The sound is better than most emulators and the game play is superb. The virtual keys not only work well but are extra large so they are easy to tap with your thumbs. All the platform games like classic Mario Brothers3 work well, overcoming iPAQ's inherent "one-key-press-only" recognition limitation. Best of all you can save a level and then load it later to continue from that point. PockeNES is my favorite Pocket PC emulator as it runs almost all my old Nintendo Entertainment System games flawlessly. Pictured below is Roller Ball, a nice, large 3-panel pinball game. Instead of waiting for someone to reinvent the wheel and create a Pocket PC pinball game, why not download this and enjoy it right away?



## The Best Conversions

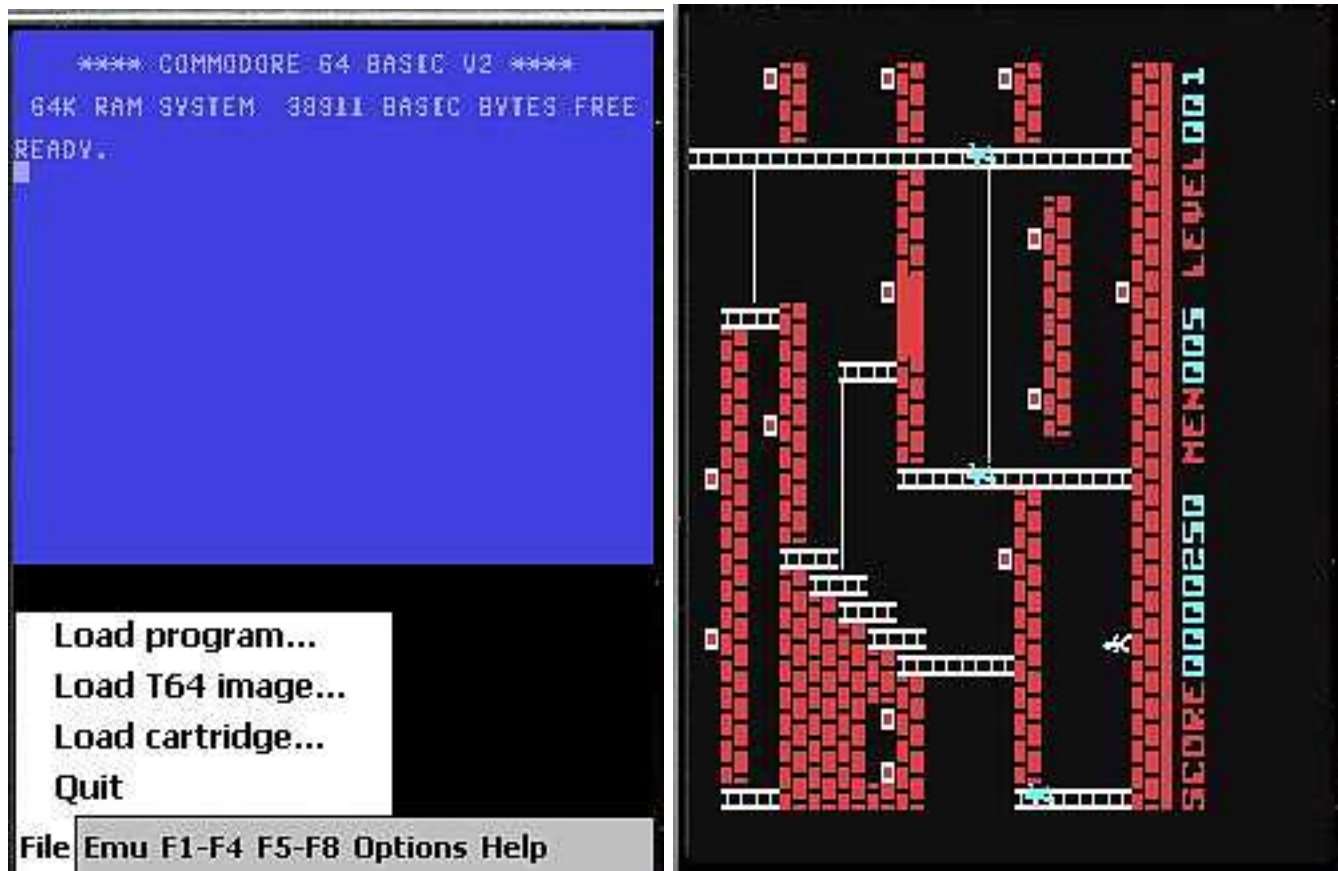
The NEC PC Engine is a great hand-held that was way beyond what I could afford when I was a kid. The game cartridges cost an arm and a leg, but were the best available at that time and still beat most of the hand-helds today. While NES games were Atari-beaters; they were simplistic compared to the PC Engine. In fact, many games like Loderunner, Galaga, etc., were totally rewritten for this elite handheld of its day. It is amazing to find such an abundance of PC Engine ROMs on the web. The quality and attention to detail in each ROM speaks for itself.

Take a look below at [Pocket Engine's](#) Alien Crush Pinball. There is nothing available on any PDA that looks this good, plays this well, and has as many panels. The PCE Emulator is equally at home in portrait mode as well as landscape. Take a look at this great Mahjong game, with the most elegant tiles available to feast your eyes upon.



## The Simplest Games

There is a great, loyal following of the Commodore 64 personal computer all over the world. Emulators for this little computer are available in almost every platform, and are some of the earliest emulators for the Pocket PC. If you have been with computers as long as I have (from OSI Superboard, Commodore Pet, C64 to Atari ST, Apple ][, and Mac), the familiar C64 blinking cursor below will bring back a rush of fond memories. Also, the game of Loderunner will add to the thrill of nostalgia. The [emulator](#) works well with the iPAQ, even with its clumsy controls. Some games are a wee bit too fast, but there are many games that run smoothly.



## The Most Popular Handheld

The only emulators that cost \$\$\$ are the GameBoy emulators. But, they are worth every cent you cough up. There is a second GameBoy emulator for the Pocket PC, called [PocketGB](#). Pocket PC owners were waiting for the author of [PalmGB](#) to upgrade it from Palm-size PC compatible to Pocket PC compatible for a long time. Finally, after PocketGB was released, PalmGB followed a few months later. I was glad that my code worked with the new version.

Both GameBoy emulators have their individual strengths. Often a game that will not run on one will probably run on the other. Note that the new PocketGB sports a virtual keypad. Very nice.

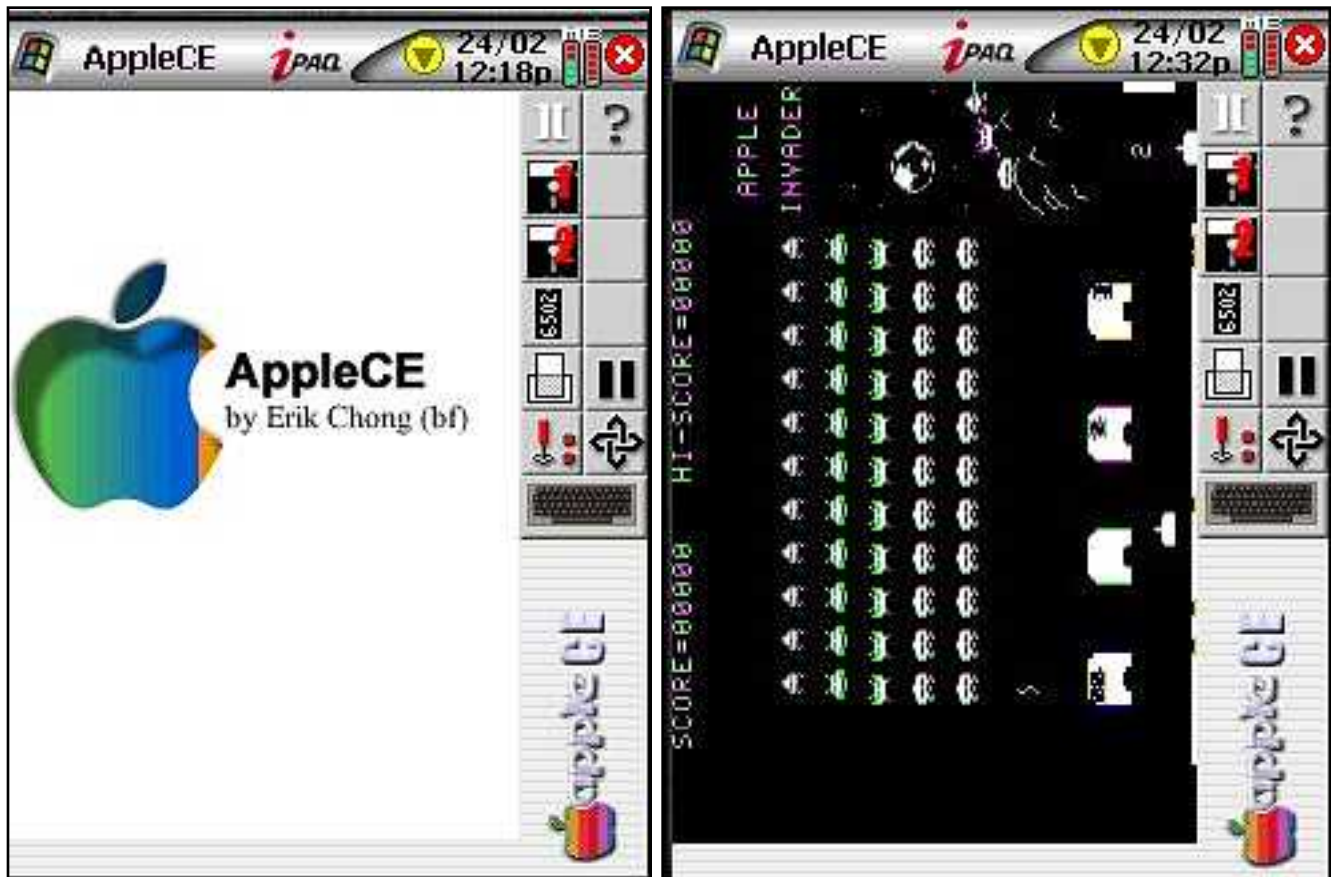


## The First Home Computer

The Apple ][ computer was the first personal computer to make it into the homes of hobbyists all over the world. To be perfectly honest, I wasn't too keen on it as the first screenshots of the Pocket PC emulator reminded me of the user-unfriendly C64 emulator. The screen appears too busy and rather miniscule.

I recall how many of the Apple ][ games were totally keyboard-driven, and thus appeared to be unplayable on the chiclet-like (only smaller and more compacted together) virtual keyboard. However, after installing it and using it for just 36 hours, I am completely sold on it.

Getting started on the [AppleCE](#) emulator is pretty much a no-brainer. Download the emulator, unzip all 3 files in the same directory anywhere on the PPC. Use the link on the 'ReadMe' file to download games to your heart's content. Store these under the 'My Document' folder in RAM or on the Storage Card. Not every game will run; some running games are not playable, but many play just fine. Perhaps the most popular game for the Apple ][ was Apple Invaders; a very well executed port of the most popular arcade game of that time.



## The Most Games

Of all the game emulators to float around the Internet, perhaps the most astonishing emulator is the Multi Arcade Machine Emulator (MAME) which runs more than 2,000 arcade machine ROMs including the NeoGeo games. There are a couple of very good MAME emulators - [iMAME](#), [MAMEboy](#) and [MAMEce](#). Some of them feature sound, virtual pads, and nice little touches; but none of them are currently complete.

Of the 3 MAME emulators that are currently available, I would strongly recommend [MAMEce](#) (large build) for these reasons: First, it runs more ROMs than any other - several hundreds (count 'em). Second, the entire folder, executable, and roms can all be kept on a storage card. Third, MAMEce allows you to list all or just the ROMs on your Pocket PC instead of all executable ROMs, making gaming much more simpler and hence pleasurable.

More than anything else, the tremendous interest in emulators is due to their wide nostalgic appeal. All-time favorites like Space Invaders and Rally-X are now kept within our palm, like the proverbial genie in a lamp.

The thing that is so super about MAME is that it uses actual arcade ROMs. It is not the scaled down "fit-to-size" console translation nor (worse still) the PC version. What you saw at the arcade parlor is what

you get on your screen - yes all of the introductions, intervals and intrusions (like high scores and all). Also, MAME moves so fast (yes, some games are too fast - like Green Beret), that you don't mind these extras as it moves along pretty speedily.

In my humble opinion, as nice as today's games are, there are very few games that beat these oldies in game play and enduring interest. I am sure any gamer will find lots of games that are their personal favorites among the vast offering of MAME. Below are the screenshots of the mother of all arcade games, the original Space Invaders (now in your pocket) and another classic, Rally-X that MAME runs.






## In Summary

There are a lot more emulators for the Pocket PC that I have not touched upon. More than likely, I will do a follow-up article on the other emulators and more on these classic games, some of which I have already loaded on my second 192mb CF (below). If you have not plunged into the ocean of emulators, come on in, the water is fine! Really.



Let me know your [comments](#) on this article and read what others have to say.











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

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Author	Topic: <b>Emulators for Pocket PCs Article Comments</b>
<p><b>Julie</b> Administrator</p> <p>Posts: 2384 From: Columbus, IN USA Registered: Feb 1999</p>	<p> posted 03-06-2001 09:22 PM    </p> <hr/> <p>Post your comments here on the Pocket PC Emulators Article.</p> <p><a href="http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/pocketpc-emulators-article.html">http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/pocketpc-emulators-article.html</a></p> <p>Just click the POST REPLY button on this page.</p>
<p><b>Tracy Smith</b> unregistered</p>	<p> posted 03-06-2001 09:56 PM  </p> <hr/> <p>Great article on emulators! I noticed in the last screen shot there was an icon for NeoGeo. Can anyone comment on which NeoGeo emulator this icon is for? Does it emulate the Pocket NeoGeo? Can it actually run games like Pocket Metal Slug?</p> <p>Thanks!</p>

**mwagstaff**  
Junior Member


Posts: 1  
From: London, UK  
Registered: Mar 2001

 posted 03-06-2001 10:03 PM    

Yes, it's a NeoGeo Pocket emulator and can be found here: <http://www.mooncliff.net/neogeopocott/>




Unfortunately, I don't know whether it can run Pocket Metal Slug because I've never played the game, but I don't see any reason why it shouldn't be able to.

By the way, you can find a complete listing of Pocket PC emulators here:  
<http://www.pocketpcgames.net/emulation/>

As you can see, there's plenty to choose from... 

-Mike <http://www.pocketgamer.org>




**Atle Ofsti**  
unregistered

 posted 03-07-2001 02:13 AM  

In the last picture of your emu review I noticed that you had a program called Pdos.  
Can anyone point me in the right direction to download/buy this program for my iPAQ?

Atle

**Raistlin**  
unregistered

 posted 03-07-2001 04:26 AM  

I just wondering what the SNES emulators are  
i never saw pSNES or SnesCE and SnesBig  
anone with this emuls ,where can i get them ?

**Henry Kong**  
unregistered



posted 03-07-2001 09:26 AM



Some answers:

1. yes, metal slug works with the pocket neogeo emulator but a tat slower (all the better to stay around longer, my dear) and still without sound

2. SNES like pocket neogeo runs without sound, but at a rather playable speed for the ipaq

check out my writeup on snes pinballs at

[http://www.brighthand.com/html/pocketpc/review/software/pinball\\_page1.html](http://www.brighthand.com/html/pocketpc/review/software/pinball_page1.html)

3. pDOS is the pocket DOS emulator it does run on the Ipaq the good guys at pDOS were extremely accomodating as they allowed me to upgrade from the ps version to the pppc sh version and then to the ppc ipaq version each requiring a new password for the fee of just the first registration!

pDOS runs on cga mode without sound

4 All these emulators and more including pDOS are listed in Mike's wonderfully comprehensive [www.pocketgamer.org](http://www.pocketgamer.org) site - links and all

**none**  
unregistered





posted 03-07-2001 11:26 PM



I looked under the emulation section of Pocketgamer.org. There are no listings for pSNES, SnesCE or SnesBig. Could you please list the web pages or download sites for these emulators? Thank you.

**henrykong**  
Junior Member

Posts: 6  
From: Singapore  
Registered: Dec 2000

 posted 03-08-2001 02:59 AM    

are you kidding

here's the direct link <http://www.pocketpcgames.net/emulation/index.shtml>

look for SNES  
they are all there  
every one of them

"seek and ye shall find"

**none**  
unregistered

 posted 03-08-2001 12:09 PM  

Ummmm.... are you kidding?




Ok, at <http://www.pocketpcgames.net/emulation/index.shtml> there are links for PocketSNES, PocketSnes9x, and TWSFC. There is no mention of pSNES, SnesCE or SnesBig. Where may I download these emulators? Thank you!

**none**  
unregistered

 posted 03-08-2001 12:16 PM  

...unless they are all on the site for TWFSC??- (which happens to be in Taiwanese, which I cannot read)

**none**  
unregistered

 posted 03-08-2001 02:16 PM  

Ok, I did some searching after my last post and eventually figured out that Snesce is the earlier version of TWFSC. As to SnesBig and psnes, are they also aliases for other emulators? I am refering to the last screenshot of your Pocket PC Emulators article: <http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/images/ppc-emu3.jpg>

**henrykong**  
Junior Member

Posts: 6  
From: Singapore  
Registered: Dec 2000



posted 03-08-2001 06:39 PM



mr none:

opps...

sorry for the red herring

it was just an innocent screen shot  
that i renamed earlier versions  
of existing snes emulators  
with different icons  
to keep me ontrack

there are just the snes emulators at [www.pocketgamer.org](http://www.pocketgamer.org)  
(mike, the http is optional)  
and all of them does not have sound

the rule of thumb is

those who will and can, program  
those who will and cant, review  
those who wont and cant, discuss  
but we need all three  
to make a community ;-)

-----  
Dr. Henry Kong  
<http://members.tripodasia.com.sg/ppcoc/>

**none**  
unregistered






posted 03-08-2001 08:30 PM



Thanks for clearing that up. You did get my hopes up for a while there, but it's ok...

**k-brown@msn.com**  
unregistered

 posted 03-12-2001 09:27 AM  

I read your article and would like to try some games, but don't have the foggiest idea how to get them on my Casio EM-500. I guess I'm not sure what an "emulator" means or does. Do I access them through the internet, or do they download directly to my Pocket PC? How much do they cost. (eg, I would like to get space invaders)....  
you can answer me at  
k-brown@msn.com  
if you have the time. Thanks...Ken

**Dan**  
unregistered

 posted 03-16-2001 11:42 PM  

r there many emulators available for hpc's? sh4 specifcly... All I've been able to find is the sinclare spectrum thingy (I'm yet to figure out what it does... lol) and a couple of dos emu's...  
Is anything else out there for sh4?

**Jumbo Mazaki**  
Junior Member

 posted 04-05-2001 04:20 AM    

Posts: 1  
From: Australia  
Registered: Apr 2001

Got my IPAQ (finally) love it.... knows about emulators for my desktop... but where do I (and we) find the emulators to download, or will the "ordinary emulators" work on my IPAQ?

Woo hooo...advance thanx to the kind soul that rescues me from the "batty" and "cubical chaos (L29)

**Julie**  
Administrator

 posted 04-05-2001 01:40 PM    

Posts: 2384  
From: Columbus, IN USA  
Registered: Feb 1999





Jumbo:

Here's the best place for emulator news and game downloads:

<http://www.pocketgamer.org/>

**rgettnrd**  
Junior Member

Posts: 1  
From:  
Registered: Apr 2001

 posted 04-15-2001 04:49 PM   

quote:

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Originally posted by Atle Ofsti:


**In the last picture of your emu review I noticed that you had a program called Pdos. Can anyone point me in the right direction to download/buy this program for my iPAQ?**

**Atle**

---

Go to <http://www.pocketdos.com>

**Brent**  
unregistered

 posted 04-17-2001 03:08 PM  

Great topic!

My 7 year old son has been using a Bung XChanger, 64MB cart and downloaded ROMS to "test" out GB games on his Gameboy Color prior to buying them (very few make it past a week of play before loss of interest occurs, though).

Your article and Julie's comments on her gaming has me contemplating picking up a used or older-technology Pocket PC for my son to pretty much only use as a gaming "toy", that is, to run emulators (since his setup won't be able to run the new GBA ROMS). Any suggestions on what to buy to realize the best value emulator-gaming Pocket PC (best bang for buck)? I figure that plenty of these must get laid aside (like my original Pilot) as owners continually upgrade in the pursuit of their latest-technology addiction.

Thanks!

**very scared**  
unregistered

 posted 07-08-2001 12:18 AM  

Who is it that when people talk about the gameboy emulators and gb roms, there is no word of it being illegal??? I was searching on the net for roms to go with the palmGB and found this whole big thing stating that palmGB, pocketGB and other Nintendo emulators and roms on the the net are illegal.

<http://www.nintendo.com/corp/faqs/legal.html>

I suggest everybody read it!

Makes me think twice about paying money into palmGB or pocketGB, since Nintendo most likely wont see a penny in license fees from the makers of those emulators.

I am very scared... 

**PeriSoft**  
unregistered

 posted 12-03-2001 11:23 AM  

Ummm, emulators aren't illegal. Why the hell should nintendo see royalties? They're losing so much money, because people are using PocketSNES instead of buying a real SNES from nintendo?

Cry me a river!


Snarfing the ROMS is technically illegal if you don't own them. But if you do, you've got a right to play them wherever you damned well please.

**PeriSoft**  
unregistered

 posted 12-03-2001 11:49 AM  

By the way, nintendo's "FAQ"s are just propoganda intended to scare people without legal knowledge.. nintendo is EXTREMELY heavy-handed (as evidenced by their illegal crushing of the Genesis by forcing developers to only develop for the SNES) and has a reputation for pretty nasty tactics. I wouldn't feel too bad.

**draco099@aol.com**  
unregistered

 posted 04-05-2002 07:30 PM  

hey i got Palm GB and registered and then i lost my name and password and i dont feel like paying money again so if you believe me can i please have a name and registrtation code frome somebody.  
thanks in advance.

**Julie**  
Administrator




Posts: 2384  
From: Columbus, IN USA  
Registered: Feb 1999

 posted 04-05-2002 08:22 PM    

Why don't you just write to the author of the software and ask him. If you really did pay for it, he should have you on file.

Julie

**drako099@aol.com**  
unregistered

 posted 04-09-2002 05:03 PM  

Because i deleated my old email address and he said i need my email and he would send it to me but i deleated it

**Sacrifusion**  
Junior Member

Posts: 2  
From:  
Registered: Apr 2002

 posted 04-24-2002 07:20 PM    

alright, just like everyone else here, I am an emulation addict... I used to have a Cassiopeia, and then an iPAQ, but now I have a Sharp Zaurus SL-5500, and if any of you don't know, it has a Linux based OS... so now here's my problem, I'm compatible with nothing now... there's been some fun things to download from [www.myzaurus.com/](http://www.myzaurus.com/) but I need emulation, so if any of you know a nes or gb emu (or any others for that matter) that can run on my new toy, please tell me... if you want to know about the zaurus look at the URL in my profile...

**AnonymousCoward**  
unregistered

 posted 05-29-2002 12:40 PM  

Look at <http://www.zsnes.com/>

The ZSNES (the most reliable windows snes emulator in my opinion) is being developed for linux now. There are also a number of other linux based emulators. I, myself, am interested to see how such emulators run as I've been considering purchasing a zaurus myself and would be absolutely ecstatic to see a PDA with some +50 keys and a 240X320 full color screen run a game emulator.

For those that don't know 320X240 is the approximate resolution that a television runs at, meaning that emulation of consoles built for standard television (such as the nes, snes, genesis, etc) **might** be displayed in amazing detail (with a few techincal shortcomings to be expected of course).

Anyways, yes, check out zsnes for linux and see if that will run/compile on your zaurus, and please post the results.

**brownman**  
unregistered



posted 05-31-2002 01:09 PM



Um.....The newest version of pocket snes (1.1 )does have sound, but with the sound on it runs extremely slow. it is available for free at [www.pocketsnes.com](http://www.pocketsnes.com) there are also extremely good roms sites on the net.

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