

LIMBOFUNK TAKES ON: DAVID LUBAR OF THQ



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I was recently very fortunate to have a brief chat with David Lubar, the sole programmer of Swamp Thing (Published by THQ) for the Nintendo Entertainment System. David is an established writer and has written many books geared towards young adults, mainly in the humor and horror genres. Though writing books is his main passion, he still codes games from time to time and has programmed on a plethora of systems including the Apple II, Atari 2600, Commodore 64, SNES and GameBoy.



While he was adamant about the fact that Swamp Thing is not one of his best works, he was kind enough to give some insight to his time working as a programmer on the NES.

[Limbofunk]: Hi David, thanks so much for taking the time to answer some of the questions I have, I really appreciate it!

[David Lubar]: Let me see how many of these I can answer. (It was a long time ago.)

[Limbo]: How did you get your start in video game programming?

[DL]: I taught myself programming after getting interested in computers around 1978. I did some simple Apple II games. I was working at Creative Computing magazine when I got a call from Sirius Software. They were looking for people to design games for the Atari 2600.

[Limbo]: What company did you work for when you programmed Swamp Thing? Did the company have any joint contracts with anyone else?

[DL]: Absolute Entertainment. They had various projects going at the time.

[Limbo]: Was there anything you remember liking/disliking more about developing a game on the NES as opposed to earlier systems you worked on?



INTERVIEW

[DL]: I thought the NES sprite system was a bit difficult to work with.

[Limbo]: How many people (approximately) comprised of the team that worked on Swamp Thing with you?

[DL]: Me, an artist, a sound guy, and a producer.

[Limbo]: Did you have any personal creative control with the game or was it more of a set in stone atmosphere?

[DL]: Sadly, my original idea was tossed as too complex. (I had various puzzles, such as transforming into a leaf, floating up, then transforming back to fall into a barrier and break it.) The people in charge wanted a standard platform game.

[DL]: Were there any issues that happened during the development of the game? Did the game wind up having any major differences from the original concept of how it was supposed to look and play?

[Limbo]: As I mentioned, my concept didn't make it. There weren't any other issues I can remember.

[Limbo]: Are there any fun little easter eggs that you remember sneaking into the game?

[DL]: There's a screen where, if you go to a specific point and do something (kneel?), you get an extra man. But I can't remember anything more than that about it.

[Limbo]: Were you happy with the final product and did you ever wind up playing the game after it was created?

[DL]: I thought it was a decent game. I've never played it since then.

