

**Yeah, it looks nice...
but why are you doing this?**

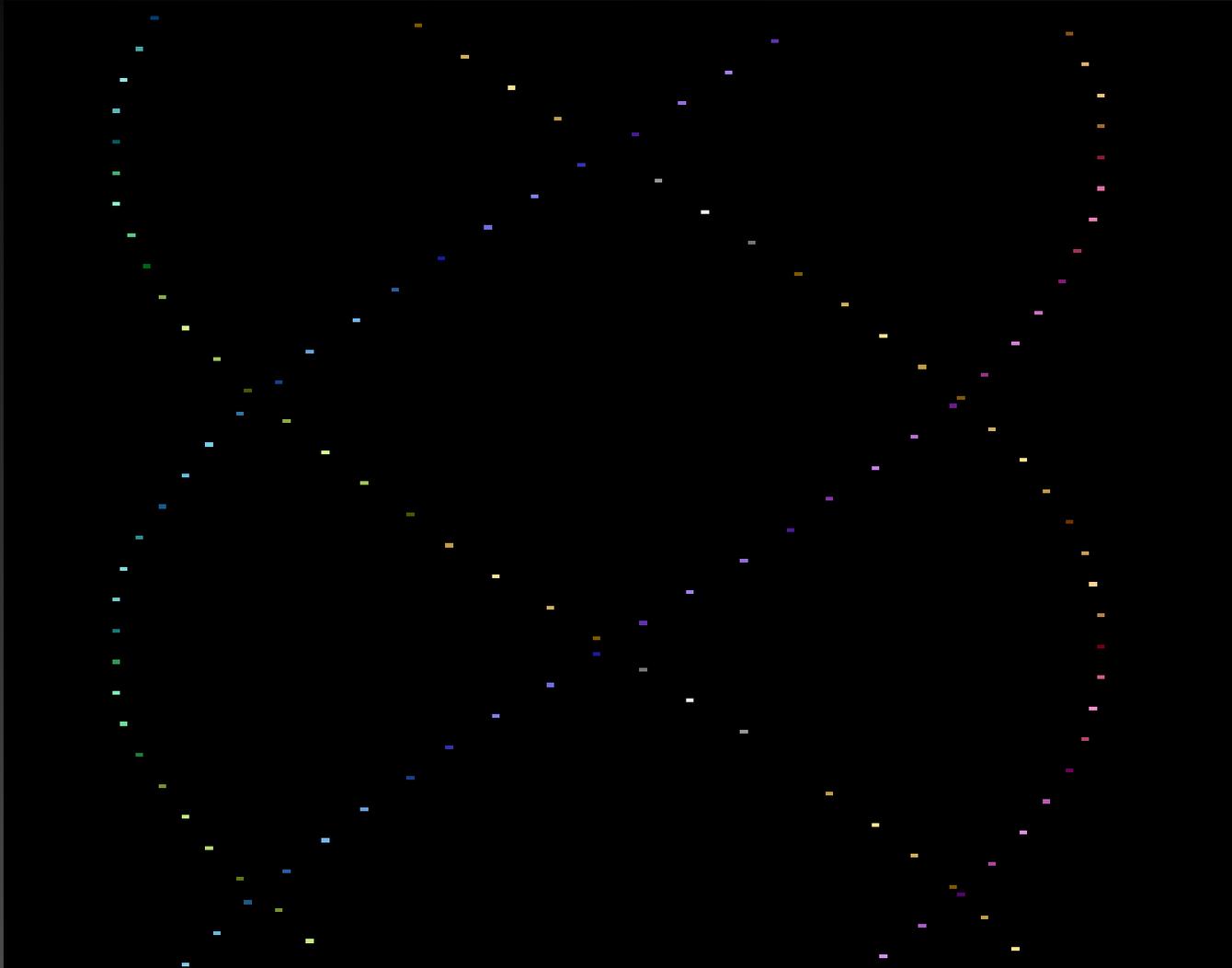
Why demo coding?

**Trying to find three answers
to this question in five minutes**

by Sven Oliver ('SvOlli') Moll

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**It started showing
something like this**



Background

The system the code runs on is an Atari 2600 VCS

Released in 1977

CPU similar to the one of the Commodore C=64

4k of addressable ROM

(using more was possible later using bankswitching)

128 bytes of RAM (for data AND stack)

(coding a twitter-ui would not be possible: 140 characters)

104 colors (PAL), very limited video/audio hardware

I started coding on it in 2011

The Question

"Yeah, it looks nice... but why are you doing this?"

To me this divides up in two parts:

1) "Why are you doing this in general?"

2) "Why on such a limited/retro platform?"

I'll try to find three answers for each of both questions now.

Trying Answer 1: Coding Is Fun

Lets try it from the most obvious point of view:

"To me it is fun."

1) Demos in general:

Coding in general is fun, at least to me it is, really!

Compared to real life TM : to some people garden work is fun, to me it's just unpleasant physical strain.

Trying Answer 1: Coding Is Fun

Lets try it from the most obvious point of view:

"To me it is fun."

2) Demos on retro hardware:

Coding on the 2600 is fun not despite, but because of the tight restrictions. In fact, most of my ideas circle around how to use these restrictions to my advantage.

Trying Answer 2: This Is Art

Let's try a more general point of view:

"This is digital art, maybe best compared to graffiti."

1) Demos in general:

What purpose has art in real life™?

As art a demo has no purpose but itself. To entertain the viewer, or maybe getting a message across.

Trying Answer 2: This Is Art

Let's try a more general point of view:

"This is digital art, maybe best compared to graffiti."

2) Demos on retro hardware:

Think of it as a graffiti done with colored nail polish. Than imagine you did an image that really looks good. Wouldn't you be satisfied? Proud if someone asks: "Is this really done just with nail polish?"

Trying Answer 3: Others Play Sudoku

From the big fun point of view:

"To me it's like playing a game."

1) Demos in general:

In real life™, some people have fun in solving sudokus or crossword puzzles, other people have even more fun creating them.

In fact a lot of demos are done by people working in the video game industry.

Trying Answer 3: Others Play Sudoku

From the big fun point of view:
"To me it's like playing a game."

2) Demos on retro hardware:

Just like a tower-defense like game. You've got these limited resources. Now make the best of it!
Explore the limits!



And There Also Is: The Party!

The Demoscene has a very nice community.

Most demos are released at big parties.

Even if you're not a coder you can participate.

"Just" as a guest or submit some self-made music, photos, there are a lot of competitions to enter.

An interesting 90 minute documentary about the demo scene called "Moleman 2" is available at:
<http://molemanfilm.com/moleman-2-download/>

Conclusion

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because I fuckin' can!"

Thank you for your attention!

Questions, like to chat?

Meet me at Aussenstelle511