



THE TETRIS EFFECT

*The Game That Hypnotized
the World*

DAN ACKERMAN

Publication Date: September 6, 2016

\$25.99 | ISBN: 978-1-61039-611-0



“A great read on a game that has hypnotized my brain and probably yours too.”

—**Steve Wozniak, cofounder of Apple**



“The definitive telling of one of the most fascinating stories in videogame history.”

—**WIRED**

“Ackerman’s account of the rise of Tetris is as captivating as watching the game’s multi-colored, four-squared objects (known as “tetrominoes”) vanish before your eyes with the right move.” —**Fortune**

“Worthwhile, informative and entertaining... a fascinating lightning-in-a-bottle account where the main protagonist is a silent, persistent cascade of shapes, compelling you to put them right.” —**Mashable**



The definitive story of a game so great, even the Cold War couldn’t stop it

Tetris is perhaps the most instantly recognizable, popular video game ever made. Based on an obscure board game, it was designed for early computers, became a hit on TV consoles, and soared in popularity with handheld devices like the Game Boy. Today it lives on in smartphones, tablets, laptops, almost any device you can imagine. All this despite the fact—or perhaps because of it—that it has no superhero to merchandise and no story to dramatize. Tetris is abstraction translated to bytes, a puzzle game in its purest form.

Yet its origin story is so improbable that it’s amazing any of us ever played the game. In this surprising and entertaining book, tech reporter Dan Ackerman explains how a Soviet programmer named Alexey Pajitnov was struck with inspiration as a teenager, then meticulously worked for years to bring the game he had envisioned to life. Despite the archaic machines (outdated even for their era) that Pajitnov worked with and the fact that he had to develop the game after-hours on his own time, Tetris worked its way first through his office, and then out of it, entrancing player after player with its hypnotic shapes. It became almost a metaphor for the late Soviet era, with the kinetic energy of commerce pushing ever harder against the walls put up by the government.

British, American, and Japanese moguls saw the game's potential and worked, often unscrupulously, to beat each other in the race to sell the game. Ackerman tells the story of these men and their maneuvers, and **how the game made it to consumers' hands in America on a Game Boy screen in 1989.**

Full of plot twists and fascinating trivia, **THE TETRIS EFFECT: The Game That Hypnotized the World** (A PublicAffairs hardcover and ebook; on sale September 6, 2016) reveals the story of one of the greatest games ever created. It is an homage to both creator and creation, and a perfect gift for anyone who's ever played the game—which is to say... everyone.

Dan Ackerman is a former radio DJ turned journalist. An editor at the leading technology news website CNET, he writes about hot-button consumer technology topics, from virtual reality to cybersecurity, and appears regularly as the in-house tech expert on *CBS This Morning*. He lives in Brooklyn with his family and a large collection of vinyl records.



More Praise for **THE TETRIS EFFECT**

“A delightful milkshake of Jason Bourne and Mr. Bean.” —**Los Angeles Review of Books**

“Ackerman has put the right pieces in the right places to create a well-written history of a game that still fascinates the world.” —**Winnipeg Free Press**

“A meticulous accounting of the rise of ‘Tetris’ from its earliest inception to its release from behind Russia's walls... For those fascinated with the way video games are created and intrigued by the history of early computers, the book will provide great entertainment, just like the game.”—**Kirkus Reviews**

“Impressive... [Ackerman] strikes a balance between fleshing out the characters involved in the game's epic rise and untangling the web of misunderstandings that accompanied it into the world... A must-read for Tetris fans”—**Library Journal**

“Computer gamers will turn this book's pages as fervently as they hit their controller keys.”
—**Booklist**

“*The Tetris Effect* explains how one guy in Russia with one little game ended up creating a global business and cultural phenomenon, influencing not only the way we play and sell computer games, but the way we make sense of the world. Ackerman here tells the story of the first and quintessential startup.”—**Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Present Shock* and *Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus***