

## Radix on TASing

As you may or may not know, there was this idea of creating a full-length documentary about TASing to open it up some for the outside world. I personally undertook the task of writing a script for it. Over the past few months I have been searching the Internet for source material and one of the things I ran across was an article published on mtv.com, on 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2006, about gamers' reactions to the first few wide-spread viral TASes. We are, of course, looking at Super Mario Bros 3 by Morimoto and Super Mario 64 by Spezzafer.

One particular quotation in the documentary caught my eye: "My basic thought is 'don't like them, haven't made them, don't watch them'". This was spoken by SDA's old head Radix, also known for his early Quake speedruns along with his work on Metroid Prime. This roused my curiosity: TASing was featured at the most recent (2014) AGDQ so has the circle finally closed? If I went ahead and asked him about his present-day sentiments on the topic, would he rephrase himself at all?

Q. Where did you first run into TASing?

A. That depends on how you define it. Way back in the late 90s, Quake runners often used a simple rocket jump script to do a few actions with a single button press. I theorized at the time that you could just write a script to do the whole map for you, if it weren't for all that pesky random stuff. I didn't give it much thought after that until the Morimoto video in 2003.

Q. What were your initial reactions to it?

A. I didn't like that it was portrayed as a legitimate play through. I had no problem with the concept though.

Now interestingly, this seems to suggest that old statement may not have taken the most accurate form he could have laid it out in. Or perhaps he was (justifiably) feeling particularly peeved at the time. It is also fascinating to notice that real-time runs and TASing have always had this gray middle area in scripting, something SDA eventually decided to ban altogether.

Q. Has the atmosphere amongst non-TASers towards TASing changed? Also, why do you think it happened?

A. Sure. Now it's a separate thing that people can respect, and nobody is trying to pass it off as a real playthrough anymore. It probably gets a whole different set of people interested in it, because real time running isn't for everybody, it needs fast reflexes that a TAS doesn't.

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Before we go any further into this interview, allow me to quote Morimoto himself (translation by Bisqwit):

“To the people who honestly thought that someone played it by hand, I feel that I've done a gravely inexcusable thing (I'm very very sorry).”

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When asked about changes in his own opinions, he refers to this:

“Personally I thought the TAS Bot at AGDQ 2014 was freaking amazing. To do some kind of buffer overflow and reprogram Super Mario World on the real hardware just blew me away. I'm not going to start downloading TASes to watch, but that's mostly because I've got a huge back log of games to play and watch.”

Then I tried to make him admit to any secret TAS romances he has had by inquiring into any other favourites he could name:

“I've seen so few. The ones at AGDQ are probably the majority of all I've seen. Of those, SMW was my favorite for the technical aspects of reprogramming a game, but MK64 was my favorite for showing off all the crazy skips in the game.”

In the end, it turns out Radix hasn't been exposed to all that many TASes since that early debacle. The situation was partially amended when I finally made him crack with a final, open-ended question that yielded the following:

“I remember years ago seeing a link to a TAS of someone who used the same input for Mega Man X and X2 at the same time, and then made the video of the play back side by side. At the time I just thought "how strange, why do that", but years later, the idea intrigues me and I wonder if it was ever done again? I guess because "2 person 1 controller" became a thing at AGDQ and it reminded me of it, though it's the sort of the opposite situation.”

Perhaps he'll like one of the 4-game ones.

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written by Swimmer (Simo Vihinen), 16/4/2014

sources:

<http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1528811/gamers-divided-over-tool-assisted-speed-runs.jhtml>

<http://tasvideos.org/SiteHistory/MorimotoAboutSMBMovie.html>