

## Finding Aid to the Chris Kohler Papers, 1993-2000

### Summary Information

**Title:** Chris Kohler papers

**Creator:** Chris Kohler (primary)

**ID:** 117.501

**Date:** 1993-2000 (inclusive); 1994-1998 (bulk)

**Extent:** 1 linear foot

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English.

**Abstract:** This compilation of fanzine materials exhibit Chris Kohler's role in video game culture as well as provide a unique and unfiltered view of video games, the gaming industry, and culture from a community of players passionate about video games. The bulk of the materials are dated between 1994 and 1998.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Conditions Governing Access:** Cassette tape and 3.5" floppy disks require advance notice to access and are limited to on-site researchers only.

**Custodial History:** The Chris Kohler papers were donated to The Strong in January 2017 as a gift from Chris Kohler. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 117.501 and were received from Chris Kohler in one box (along with other fanzine materials housed in the library).

**Preferred citation for publication:** Chris Kohler papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong.

**Processed by:** Nicole Pease, August-October 2017

### Controlled Access Terms

#### Personal Names

- Johnson, Chris
- Kohler, Chris
- Lanoie, Alan
- Pittaro, Mike
- Ragan, Jess

### Subjects

- Infestation (fanzine)
- The Gameroom Blitz (fanzine)
- Video games--Evaluation
- Video games--Fanzines
- Video games--History
- Video Zone (fanzine)

### Biographical Note

Chris Kohler is an American author and video game journalist.

While in sixth grade, Chris Kohler worked on his first video game “magazine” that included tips, reviews, and artwork. In 1993 at age 13, Kohler produced the first six-page issue of his fanzine *Video Zone* (titled after the final level of the television show *Nick Arcade*) using Microsoft Publisher 1.0. Kohler continued publishing *Video Zone* throughout the 1990s. (Though fanzine creators rarely profited from their homemade publications, the primary method of compensation was sending someone a copy of your own ‘zine in return.) Kohler received his first paid assignment at 16 years old to write for *Game On! USA*. He later became Editor of the Game|Life section of *WIRED* from 2005 to 2016.

As of 2017, he is Features Editor at the video game website Kotaku. Kohler is the author of *Power Up: How Japanese Video Games Gave the World an Extra Life*, *Retro Gaming Hacks: Tips & Tools for Playing the Classics*, and *Final Fantasy V*. He is also a co-host of the long-running trivia podcast “Good Job, Brain!”

For additional information on Chris Kohler and his fanzine history, see his [interview with J.P. Dyson for the CHEGheads Blog](#).

### Collection Scope and Content Note

The Chris Kohler papers contain materials from 1993 through 2000, with the bulk of the papers dated between 1994 and 1998. This collection contains materials related to original fanzines created and collected by Chris Kohler. These include digital and audio materials, correspondence, reviews, clippings, stories, fanzines, fliers, administrative materials (labels, business cards, receipt), and drawings (original and copied).

The Chris Kohler papers have been arranged into three series, one of which has been divided into subseries. This collection is housed in two archival document boxes.

### Related Materials

Copies of other fanzines collected by Kohler, as well as copies of *Video Zone*, have been transferred to library holdings at The Strong and can be located by searching the online library catalog.

### System of Arrangement

Series I: Fanzines, 1993-1999

Subseries A: *Video Zone* fanzine, 1994-1999

Subseries B: Fanzines with contributions from Chris Kohler, 1994-1998

Subseries C: Fanzines collected by Chris Kohler, 1993-1995

Series II: Correspondence, 1993-2000

Series III: Miscellaneous, c. 1996-1998

### Contents List

#### Series I: Fanzines, 1993-1999

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains fanzines which were created by, contributed to, or collected by Chris Kohler through his role as a fanzine editor in the 1990s.

#### Subseries A: *Video Zone* fanzine, 1994-1999

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains master copies of *Video Zone* issues, original drawings, duplicate pages, and alternative covers as created by Chris Kohler. (Photocopied issues are housed in the library stacks of the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play.) Related correspondence can be found in Series II.

#### Box 1

- Folder 1 *Video Zone* (Issues 7-18), 1994-1996
- Folder 2 *Video Zone* (Issues 19-30), 1996-1999
- Folder 3 *Video Zone* – Drawings, c. 1994-1999
- Folder 4 *Video Zone* – Alternate/duplicate covers, 1995-1998
- Folder 5 *Video Zone* – Pages from unidentified issues, c. 1998

#### Subseries B: Fanzines with contributions from Chris Kohler, 1994-1998

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains fanzines to which Chris Kohler contributed, including *Infestation*, a completely hand-drawn fanzine with personalized drawings by Alan Lanoie. Related correspondence can be found in Series II.

#### Box 1

- Folder 6 *Infestation*, 1994-1996
- Folder 7 *The Gameroom Blitz*, 1998

**Subseries C: Fanzines collected by Chris Kohler, 1993-1995**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains fanzines (including some on floppy disks) as collected by Chris Kohler. Many were sent to Kohler in exchange for an issue of *Video Zone*, a popular method of payment between fanzine editors. Related correspondence can be found in Series II. (Issues of additional fanzines collected by Kohler are housed in the library stacks of the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play.)

**Box 1**

- Folder 8 *Encrypt!*, c. 1994
- Folder 9 *Game Guru* (hardcopies and floppy disks), 1994
- Folder 10 *The Sports Page*, 1995
- Folder 11 *Video Games Electrozone* (VGE), c. 1993
- Folder 12 *Video Empire*, c. 1994
- Folder 13 *Video-Game Newsletter*, 1994
- Folder 14 *Viz.com*, n.d.

**Series II: Correspondence, 1993-2000**

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains correspondence, envelopes (which provide additional contextual information), articles to be included in *Video Zone* issues, stories, fliers, a cassette tape, and other relevant clippings.

**Box 2**

- Folder 15 Correspondence (1 of 2), 1993-2000
- Folder 16 Correspondence (2 of 2), 1993-1997
- Folder 17 Correspondence – Alan Lanoie (*Infestation/Video-Game Newsletter*), c. 1994-1996
- Folder 18 Correspondence – Jess Ragan (*The Gameroom Blitz*), c. 1997-1999
- Folder 19 Correspondence – Mike Pittaro (*Uproar*), 1994-1995
- Folder 20 Additional envelopes, c. 1995-1996

**Series III: Miscellaneous, c. 1996-1998**

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains miscellaneous materials including administrative materials (labels, business cards, receipt), reviews, and an image on transparency.

**Box 2**

- Folder 21 Miscellaneous, c. 1996-1998