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Nintendo's Logo Evolution

The thought process in creating Nintendo's logo (Fig. 1) all starts within the company's creation. The founder of Nintendo (Fusajiro Yamauchi) had first written the company name and logo in Kanji (Fig. 2). Originally, the company was created to produce playing cards for gambling. When it comes to words and statement written in Kanji, the word Nintendo is too ambiguous to translate, but commonly people like to refer to the Nintendo saying as "leave luck to heaven' or 'the company that is allowed to make/sell hanafuda" (Ashcraft).

The company was born with the name Nintendo since it was first founded and has stuck to that name, along with keeping that name to their logo excellently. They have changed the way they write the word Nintendo, its size, color or change where the name Nintendo is within the logo, but consistently it has always kept the name as the logo.

Nintendo is a brand that has marketed itself excellently throughout the years, to the point of unintentionally (or intentionally) causing people to call any video game related products "Nintendo". The Nintendo logo is a simple logo that is easy to recognize at first glance, being at the top of its selective industries. Whether it is for you or a child to play an entertainment media at home or outside of home, Nintendo has had its brand stamped nicely on everything related to its products, from buying it in the store to when your turn on the desired video game (Fig. 3).

The typeface used in the Nintendo logo has evolved tremendously since its Kanji typeface origin (Fig. 2). Once Nintendo began creating western style cards and selling their products internationally, they needed a name that was not written in Kanji in order to be easy to read and recognized outside of Japan, so they wrote out the phonetic pronunciation in English vocabulary (Fig. 4). Ever since becoming international, Nintendo favored and kept the western writing of the name of "Nintendo" consistently since 1950 to this date (Voskuil).

Even though Nintendo kept its brand's overall look to consistently say the word "Nintendo", it changed the typeface of its logo multiple times, letting the design of the name adapt to fit the overall design of the product its stamped on (Fig. 5). Not once did Nintendo ever let their logo or typeface stay consistent as shown below (Fig. 5). However, it was not until the company's second time creating a largely successful product (Nintendo Ultra Machine) that Nintendo stuck with a specific typeface. The typefaces used on the Nintendo Ultra Machine were large bold bulging letters, with thin horizontal lines, and a

square dot on top of the "i" (Fig. 6). With the overall logo changing and evolving throughout the year that followed, the only thing Nintendo stuck with was just the typeface used on Nintendo Ultra Machine, using its typeface after the toy was created and sold over a million units. Many different colors were used for its logo and brand, outside of the typeface, none of it was consistent and was always adapted to fit the product that it was selling (Fig. 7).

It was not until their success as a video game company, did their logo start to stick consistent starting in 1981. Which is a oval shaped rectangular ring, like the shape of a racetrack, surrounding the preferred typeface of Nintendo. Originally this logo was created in black for a popular arcade game called Donkey Kong (Fig. 8), but later the color shifted into red in 1983 (Fig. 9).

Around 1980s, Nintendo was selling their video game products and marketing them as toys instead of a video game. Due to this fact, it seems this is the main reason their logo was red for a long period of time, bright red color typeface, usually in front of white space (Fig. 9). It was easier for parents to buy Nintendo products for kids when it was seen more like a children's toy then a computer hardware/software, with the added advantage of selling their products in both toy stores and electronic entertainment stores. Around 2006, Nintendo was no longer marketing their products as toys and more like what they were, video games. Shifting their red logo to a more neutral grey color (Fig. 1).

The iconic red or grey Nintendo logo nowadays can be found anywhere and everywhere, stamped all over their products, from the moment you are about to buy their product till the time you start to play it at home. The logo is always placed in the corner of all their advertisements. The logo is always on their products, both hardware and software, on the manuals and anywhere towards where your eyes are focused on their respective merchandise (Fig. 9).
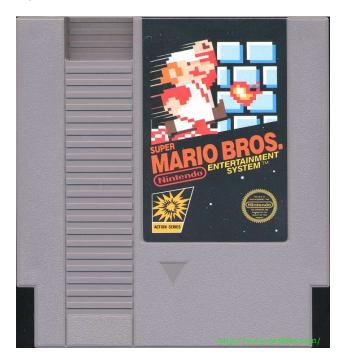
Figure Reference

Fig. 1

Nintendo. *Nintendo's present logo 2006*

Fig. 2

beforemario.com. *Nin-ten-do written in Kanji*. 2012

Fig. 3

Nintendo. *Mario Bros cartridge*. 2016

Fig. 4

beforemario.com. *International Nintendo Playing Cards*. 2012

Fig. 5

beforemario.com. *Nintendos Pre-Ultra Machine Logos*. 2012

Fig. 6

beforemario.com. *Nintendo Ultra Machine logo*. 2012

Fig. 7

beforemario.com. *Nintendo's logos Post-Ultra Machine*. 2012

Fig. 8

beforemario.com. *Donkey Nintendo Logo*. 2012

Fig. 9

Nintendo. *Nintendo's logo 1982-2006*

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