

## Excerpt: Interviews by an Optimist #66 - Jason Little

Posted on Sep. 08, 2005 by Rick Thornquist by  
[http://www.gamefest.com/news/feature\\_detail/3159\\_0\\_3\\_0\\_C/](http://www.gamefest.com/news/feature_detail/3159_0_3_0_C/)

By Tom Vasel  
September 8, 2005



*Tom Vasel: Do you think that there are too many games and game companies right now? Is the market growing enough to support them all?*

Jay Little: As an avid collector, as well as an enthusiastic gamer, I don't think you can ever really have too many games (in your collection or on the market). Let me qualify that -- you can never have too many \*good\* games. However, I do think there are a few too many companies willing to produce any sort of game, just to get one to market and try to tap into the rapid growth of the gaming community. So for every great game we run across, there are ten more that don't seem ready for the gaming marketplace.

This is a tough position to be in. I think that there are so many different companies and products vying for attention (and money) that new publishers risk turning off potential customers if their initial products don't pique interest right away. A gamer disappointed with a publisher's first game may not be willing to explore other titles from that publisher, given the poor first impression.

With so many established publishers pumping out games at ever increasing rates, I can see why a small publisher might be tempted to get some designs to market in an attempt to secure a foothold or generate some name recognition. But they really need to make sure it's a solid game. The more intelligent and resourceful the gaming community becomes, the more easily gamers can recognize (and then avoid) poor games.

But it's definitely worth sifting through so many games. Sure, there are bound to be more games that don't appeal to a certain segment of gamers, or that come across as poorly designed and produced products. But then there are also quite a few real gems that we might never otherwise have seen if small or new publishers didn't accept the risk in the first place. A few titles that come to mind over the last few years that fall into this category for me would be *Who Stole Ed's Pants* (Eight Foot Llama), *Battlestations* (Gorilla Games), *Duel of Ages* (Venatic Games), *Pizza Box Football (On The Line)* and *Ideology: War of Ideas (Z-Man Games)*. So from that regard, I'm certainly glad as many publishers are bringing new games to the market.

I do think there are enough gamers with enough disposable income to support more and more game titles, but I think gamers are also becoming much more savvy about investing in games. With so much information available at their finger tips, consumers are exposed to far less risk than they once were -- you can research a new game, read reviews, download rules and be so much better informed that I think it's easier now to filter through available games and find ones that are more likely to be popular with the buyer. Fewer duds, happier gamers, more money left to spend on other games that interest them.

In fact, I've seen my own gaming purchase behavior change substantially over the last few years due to the information available online. While I used to wander into a hobby store and buy games based almost solely on the information on the gamebox, I am far less likely to purchase games on a whim. Just a few years ago, probably a good 2/3rds of my gaming purchases were on a whim, whereas now I probably only purchase about 10% of my games without doing substantial research, visiting publisher websites, or looking for information on BoardGameGeek.com.