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Gaming

Microsoft has open sourced the Zork trilogy of text games

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Now future generations can all be eaten by a
grue.



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Infocom

Preservation has become a pressing topic for games in this era of [digital-only releases](#) and games-as-a-service. So it's wonderful to have a big win in archiving a trio of seminal text games for the ages. Microsoft [announced](#) today that the code for *Zork*, *Zork II* and *Zork III* will be made available open source under the MIT License. The company's Open Source Programs Office, Xbox and Activision all contributed to the effort. "The goal is not to modernize Zork but to preserve it as a space for exploration and education," Microsoft team members wrote in the blog post sharing the news.

They're works well-worth studying. The first *Zork* was a milestone moment for parser games that still inspires the present-day interactive fiction community. Not only was it a unique experience of narrative and puzzles, but the accomplishments of the Z-Machine virtual machine it ran on helped make *Zork* easily available to players on multiple platforms during the rise of personal computers in the 1990s. There are still modern Z-Machine interpreters out there (or you can buy and play all three Zork titles the normal way thanks to the [similarly preservation-minded folks](#) at Good Old Games).

The code for many famous text games made by Infocom was released on GitHub [in 2019](#), but the rights still technically belonged to Activision, which could have issued a takedown. This move keeps the code for this iconic Zork games available for the ages.



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