

NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

WANNA TRADE?

CD Cardz open up new entertainment

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Newhouse News Service

Remember the good old days when baseball cards were a nickel a pack?

No? Ask your dad.

Then ask him for \$15 for a pack of computer CD Cardz.

If that sounds like a lot of money even with inflation, it's because the new version of the old collecting pastime is a whole new ball game.

COMICS

The Cardz are playing-card-size CD-ROMs that hold up to 80 megabytes of full-screen video, photos, music, screen-savers, articles, games, puzzles downloadable software and hyperlinks to Internet sites.

If this sounds confusing, ask your kid.

The first of the new line of cards from Serious USA hypes movies, such as "Planet of the Apes" and "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within." The latter was based on a video game, bringing things full circle.

The cards have comic connections that will likely grow stronger. So far, the "Final Fantasy" cards feature the artwork of Yoshitaka Amano, the Japanese artist who designed the characters and monsters. Amano is working on a text and art project for Marvel on Elektra and Wolverine. The "Planet of the Apes," now out in comic form from Dark Horse Comics, has a long history of adaptation into comics, including a

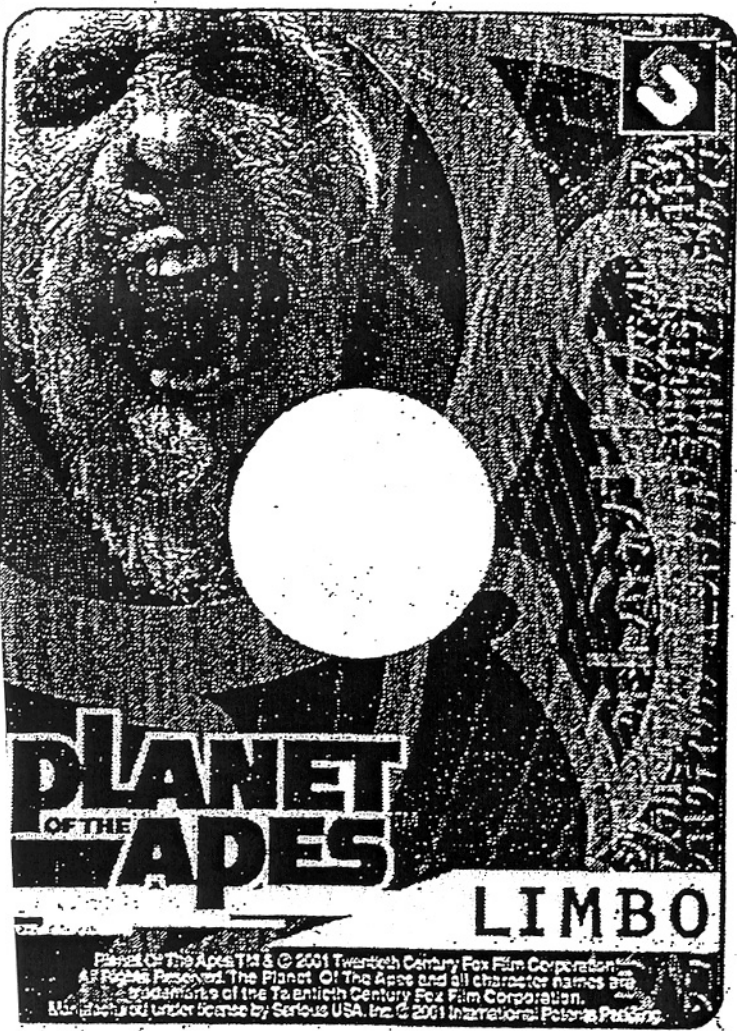
magazine run of original stories for Marvel in the 1970s.

The cards play on the CD player of your computer. They seem to be too small, but just put them in the center of the tray and technology will do the rest.

Be warned, though - I found them a little stubborn to turn off. I had to physically eject a card and do a control-alt-delete sequence to get it off the screen.

The trailer of the film fills the screen with some pretty fascinating scenes. The motion is a bit jerky, but that could be more the fault of my computer than the product.

The Cardz are a big hit in England, where they started out with the "Euro 2000 Soccer Championship" 24-card set featuring profiles of players, biographies, statistics and video from the game. Sets followed for the wonderful, if overlooked, animated science-fiction film "Titan A.E."; a British boy-band called Westlife; and a television series, called "Butt Ugly Martians," scheduled for American syndication later this year.



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next thing in trading cards is here: CD cardz featuring photos and background on hit movies such as "Planet of the Apes."