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THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE GOES RETRO WITH CUSTOM-DEVELOPED PLAYABLE 8-BIT VIDEO GAME PLUS! AN 8-BIT-THEMED SCIENCE AFTER HOURS

PHILADELPHIA May 23, 2018—The Franklin Institute takes gamers back to the “golden age” of gaming with the release of a custom-developed 8-bit-style platform video game that follows the adventures of “8-Bit Ben” a pixelated Ben Franklin. The Institute is also bringing back the ever-popular 8-Bit-themed *Science After Hours* for adults 21+ on Tuesday, June 26. Both are inspired by the current special exhibition *Game Masters* and its featured 100+ playable video games from the past four decades of gaming—including 8-bit classics *Donkey Kong* and *Space Invaders*.

Developed by The Franklin Institute’s internal digital team using GameMaker Studio 2 with three levels planned for launch, the game follows “8-Bit Ben” on a quest to collect keys and capture electricity from lightning bolts while avoiding pitfalls to survive. The early levels find “Ben” weathering thunderstorms and climbing Independence Hall in search of lightning bolts, with new levels planned to showcase more of Franklin’s most famous inventions and discoveries.

To create the sounds of the game, the Institute leveraged the many musical talents of Ben Franklin and put a new spin on sheet music discovered in 1940 from a rare string quartet possibly composed by Franklin around 1778 while living in Paris. Three parts of the original *quartetto*—March, Minuet, and Capriccio—were converted into MusicXML, and then arranged for 8-bit-style sound: a pulse wave, some square waves, and white noise for percussion.

The Adventures of Ben Franklin will be released on The Franklin Institute’s website for mobile and desktop platforms Wednesday, May 23 at <https://www.fi.edu/8bitbengame>, it will also be available to play inside *Game Masters: The Exhibition*.

“In addition to complementing *Game Masters* and our ancillary programs that focus on the technology and development behind video games, the launch follows a string of recent digital initiatives including the Institute’s first-ever mobile app, virtual reality, and augmented reality,” said Larry Dubinski, President, and CEO of The Franklin Institute. “All were designed to enhance our visitors’ experience whether onsite or offsite—plus they are tremendously fun and engaging.”

The Franklin Institute showcases partners and activities that demonstrate 8-bit technology and pays tribute to an era that launched a new generation of gaming that remains relevant today during [Science After Hours: 8-Bit](#) on June 26, as part of the Institute's popular adults 21+ after-hours series. Highlights of the evening include live performances by Super Thrash Bros. in the Fels Planetarium, 8-Bit Quizzo, Pac-Man mania, plus special guest Dr. Frank Lee, founder of Drexel University's Entrepreneurial Game Studio and mastermind behind the large-scale playable version of Tetris that was projected on the Cira Centre circa 2014. *Science After Hours: 8-Bit* is from 7:00-10:00pm and includes a cash bar. Admission is \$20 or \$15 for Members, plus an additional \$10 for optional access to *Game Masters: The Exhibition*.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Link to play [The Adventures of Benjamin Franklin](#)

Link to [assets](#) including Animations and GIFs

Link to [screenshots](#) including the below



THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

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