

# **Ms. Pac-Man and a Pac-Landful of legal issues**

## **The Ms. Pac-Man Legal Issues Timeline**

History/Summary of legal tension between General Computer Corporation, AtGames Cloud Holdings LLC and Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc. over the royalty rights to the Ms. PAC-MAN IP and related elements



Summary by nickisonlinet (fanart pictured drawn by me)

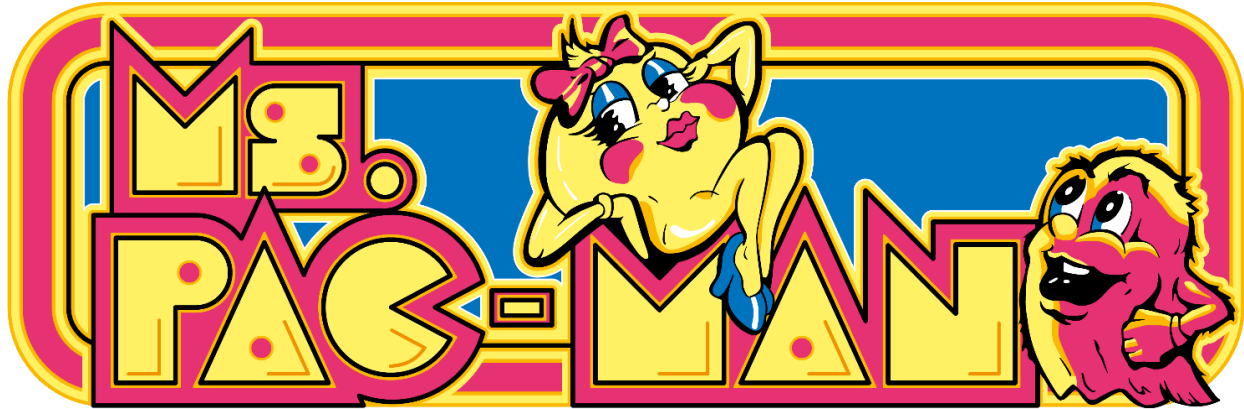
Credits to MpaulZ and Ryan Silberman for additional information

Some information cited from [pacman.fandom.com](http://pacman.fandom.com) (Pac-Man Wiki)

This is a document that aims to provide a detailed summary detailing the legal status surrounding the Ms. PAC-MAN character, IP and elements.

If there is something inaccurate with the timeline that you feel like needs to be corrected, let me know with a comment note!

# Introduction/TL;DR



Hey everyone! As many of you are already aware, Ms. PAC-MAN (the game and character) is currently in a state of limbo due to a current legal tension between Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc. and AtGames Cloud Holdings LLC over shares for the Ms. Pac-Man game. And why's that? Well to put in in one word:



*money.*

That's why.

Before I start: **AtGames does NOT own Ms. PAC-MAN.** Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc. owns the Ms. PAC-MAN game, characters, elements and overall copyright to the intellectual property globally. Bandai Namco however, is obligated to fulfill a royalty share contract that was formed during the height of the Ms. PAC-MAN arcade game's popularity due to a dispute between Bally Midway (the distributors of PAC-MAN in North America from 1980-1987) and the original developers of Ms. PAC-MAN (General Computer Corporation, abbreviated as GCC). An arbitration in 2006 occurred as a result of unpaid royalties to GCC, and resulted in Namco's relationship with GCC becoming strained. In 2019, the royalty contract for Ms. PAC-MAN was sold to AtGames Holdings LLC; the royalty stream that would be directed to GCC are now instead directed to AtGames. Bandai Namco had planned a resolution with the GCC developers in 2018 and 2019, and alleged AtGames had disrupted this resolution. This interference has given Bandai Namco's executives cold feet with future usage of Ms. PAC-MAN. While Ms. PAC-MAN continues to see releases of arcade cabinets, plug and play consoles and handhelds, Ms. PAC-MAN has largely disappeared from the mainstream PAC-MAN media and the mainstream game platform scene and has been replaced numerous times with stand-in characters (both in new and old games), in addition to the game no longer seeing frequent re-releases. This is because Bandai Namco disfavors engaging in projects in which it is obligated to pay royalties to AtGames, hence Ms. PAC-MAN's presence in new media becoming largely forbidden by Bandai Namco.

As things stand right now:

- **Bandai Namco:** owns the full Ms. PAC-MAN copyright (the game, character and all its elements).

- **Bally Midway:** owns nothing. Namco's original distribution agreement granted them rights to distribute the PAC-MAN IP in North America until 1987.
- **AtGames:** is owed 7% of royalty shares of Ms. PAC-MAN when the IP is used for commercial purposes (home console games, arcade machines with coin slots, mobile devices and everything else like that) as they now hold G.C.C.'s royalty contract. As a result of GCC's 2006 arbitration, Bandai Namco is forced to fulfill this contract without exception
- **G.C.C.:** owns nothing now as they sold their royalty contract to AtGames

But that's just surface knowledge; the following is a full timeline of events surrounding the current legal status and Ms. PAC-MAN's latest appearances within video games and/or promotional material. It's gonna be a rough read, isn't it?

It begins. I spare your soul.

# 1980-2000: Ms. Pac-Man's birth (and the contract's birth)

## 1980

- Pac-Man is released to world acclaim by Namco. Released in July in Japan, later in North America by October-November. Bally Midway handles distribution of the Pac-Man IP in North America.

## 1981

- Developer team **General Computer Corporation** (to be referred as **G.C.C.** in abbreviation, alternatively referred as **Gencomp** in the code for Ms. Pac-Man), formed the same year, reverse engineers Pac-Man to create **Crazy Otto** (pictured), an unauthorized modification kit for the game designed to increase the game's complexity and difficulty following the completion of Super Missile Attack, an unauthorized modification of Atari's Missile Command. G.C.C. primarily sold modification kits for profit in arcades. The Crazy Otto prototype carries all of what would eventually be released as Ms. Pac-Man; with the exception of Pac-Man being replaced by a two legged critter called Otto, and ghosts being replaced by fuzzy monsters with antennas.
- **WRITER'S NOTE:** A modification kit would be better known as a ROM hack in today's terminology.
- July: G.C.C. is sued by Atari for distributing the unauthorized Super Missile Attack; Crazy Otto is finished during the ongoing court case (California Extreme 2024 panel)
- G.C.C. reaches settlement with Atari: G.C.C. would develop games for Atari but was forbidden from selling new modification kits without approval from the game's original manufacturer. This term lasted two years
- G.C.C. intends to release Crazy Otto with or without Midway's blessing, but presents Crazy Otto to Bally Midway to avoid legal troubles
- Bally Midway takes interest in Crazy Otto and wants to produce Crazy Otto as a full sequel to Pac-Man.
- Bally Midway began collaboration with Namco's Masaya Nakamura to distribute Crazy Otto, Crazy Otto rights acquired from G.C.C. and the game turns into "**Ms. Pac-Man**" in the collaboration process between GCC, Bally Midway and Namco.



## 1982

- February: Ms. Pac-Man is released to acclaim in North America in arcades by Bally Midway. The Ms. Pac-Man character becomes a prominent part of Pac-Man media and merchandise.
- October: **G.C.C. enters a legal dispute with Bally Midway over royalty shares for Ms. Pac-Man.** (2016 GDC Postmortem panel)
- **GCC seeks to obtain royalties for Ms. Pac-Man and Baby Pac-Man appearing in other Pac-Man games** such as Mr. and Mrs. Pac-Man, Jr. Pac-Man, Baby Pac-Man and the Pac-Man animated TV cartoon series from Hanna-Barbera. (California Extreme 2024 panel)
- **NOTE:** Mr. and Mrs. Pac-Man is a Pac-Man-themed pinball machine game produced by Bally Midway in 1982.
- **NOTE:** Jr. Pac-Man and Baby Pac-Man are arcade games in the Pac-Man series: Jr Pac-Man (1983), is based on the Namco Pac-Man hardware and features Pac-Man and Ms. Pac-Man. Game is developed by GCC. Baby Pac-Man, (1983) is a video game/pinball hybrid game. Ms. Pac-Man appears on the pinball artwork, but is not developed by G.C.C.; it was developed by Dave Nutting Associates.

## 1983

- October: **G.C.C. and Bally Midway settle for a royalty share contract in a three-way agreement between G.C.C., Bally Midway and Namco;** G.C.C. would earn royalty payments for any Ms. Pac-Man coin-op (coin-operated machine, as in Ms. Pac-Man arcade machines with a coin slot), but does not apply to merchandising or non-arcade ports of the game (like home console ports). Per the original contract, Namco/Midway has a royalty free license to use Ms. Pac-Man characters. (2016 GDC Postmortem panel and California Extreme 2024 panel).
- G.C.C. develops "Pac-Baby" which would eventually be distributed as Jr. Pac-Man; the sequel to Ms. Pac-Man.
- December: Jr. Pac-Man is released in arcades.
- G.C.C. develops Atari home console versions of Ms. Pac-Man and Jr. Pac-Man in addition to various Atari home console ports of Namco and Atari games.

## 1984

- Late summer: G.C.C. abandons video game development and changes business towards peripherals and laser printers for personal computers and the Apple Macintosh. General Computer Corporation rebrands as GCC Technologies. Royalty share contract remains with G.C.C. group.

## 1987

- Bally Midway's distribution contract with Namco America expires; Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man and other related Namco IP distribution rights transfer back to Namco America. Following Namco reobtaining rights, Ms. Pac-Man games, characters and elements continue to become widespread with several Namco-produced and/or licensed Pac-Man products. No legal tensions occurred until 2000.



# 2001-2018: Unpaid royalties and arbitrations ahoy; Ms. Pac-Man's fading presence

## 2001

**Note:** Beginning from 2005-2006, the contents of Ms. Pac-Man appearing in new media had begun to decrease as legal tensions began to arise; starting from 2005, this will document notable appearances of elements and usage of Ms. Pac-Man contents to hint at what applies and what does not apply to the royalties agreement.

- Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga 20 Year Reunion/Class of 1981 (coin-operated) arcade cabinet is released (pictured) by Namco America, which features the original arcade version of Ms. Pac-Man, Galaga and Pac-Man (as a hidden game). Per Kevin Curran (GCC developer), **no royalty payments were made to G.C.C.** from Namco America with Ms. Pac-Man usage and caught the attention of the former developers, who were not paid their owed royalties. This event begins the long and never-ending legal complications surrounding Ms. Pac-Man.
- **Successors of G.C.C. file litigation against Namco America.**
- **NOTE:** Per Kevin Curran, Namco America staff at the time was unaware of the contract (given the original contract was formed more than 20 years ago at the time), most Namco employees at the time of Ms. Pac-Man's original release were no longer employed at the company.



## 2002

- Kevin Curran of G.C.C. alongside former G.C.C. staff contacted Namco America in regards to the contract extents. Through 2002-2006, the royalties were negotiated and not fulfilled by Namco.
- **NOTE:** Per the original contract (which had not been updated since 1983), the arbitrator noted G.C.C.'s royalties applied to "coin-operated games". (which means arcade machines with a coin slot for quarters) Namco America distributed Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga 20 Year Reunion in coin-operated and home forms (home forms are free-to-play cabinets without a coin slot.), so the **royalties only applied to coin-operated cabinets** and not home cabinets.

## 2005

- February: Namco Museum Battle Collection for the PlayStation Portable is released in Japan. This game features the Ms. PAC-MAN game and Ms. PAC-MAN as the second playable character in "Pac-Man



Arrangement (2005/CS. Ver)”; both the Ms. PAC-MAN game and character are notably excluded from the European release, which was released in December later that year (by the time the arbitration with G.C.C. for royalty rights had begun). In the European release, **a flower Pac-Man appears as the second playable character instead** in Pac-Man Arrangement (pictured; left is original release, right is European release). Subsequent re-releases of Pac-Man Arrangement (2005/CS. Ver) omit the multiplayer game modes and credits sequences, both which feature Ms. PAC-MAN. The port of Pac-Man Arrangement in PAC-MAN MUSEUM+ however, restores the credits sequence and thus Ms. PAC-MAN’s appearance.

- Namco Museum 50th Anniversary is released for PlayStation 2, Xbox, Nintendo GameCube and Microsoft Windows. This is the first re-release of the original Ms. Pac-Man arcade ROM for home consoles.
- Namco America becomes Namco Bandai Games America (to be referred as **Namco Bandai** from here on) through the merger of their parent company.
- Pac-Man World Rally for PlayStation 2, Xbox, Nintendo GameCube, PlayStation Portable and Microsoft Windows is released. This is the last original “Pac-Man” branded game to feature Ms. Pac-Man as a prominent and playable character.

## 2006

- Until then, negotiations with Namco Bandai Games America went through to no progress, and royalty offers were met with resistance from Namco Bandai. **G.C.C. demands an arbitration.** (Arbitration had been in motion as well prior in 2005)
- **NOTE: Among the types of Ms. Pac-Man products brought up in the dispute by G.C.C. included the following: “Non Ms. Pac-Man games with Ms. Pac-Man characters, Ms. Pac-Man Consumer Video Products, Ms. Pac-Man Handheld Products, Ms. Pac-Man Electronic Distribution Products, Ms. Pac-Man Coin-op games and Ms. Pac-Man Character Merchandising”.**

## 2007

- Ms. PAC-MAN is released for Xbox 360 as a digital title via the Xbox Live Arcade service.
- Ms. PAC-MAN is released for iOS and Android devices.
- Mario Kart Arcade GP 2, an arcade game based on Nintendo’s Mario Kart series, is released for arcades. Ms. PAC-MAN appears as a playable character. This is the latest instance of Ms. Pac-Man appearing as a major character in an original arcade game.

## 2008

- Ms. PAC-MAN royalty contract arbitration concludes on November 10: When the original contract was presented through court, an arbitrator discovered the contract defined **“electronic distribution” of Ms. Pac-Man** and thus began to affect the commercial appearance of Ms. Pac-Man. The contract also states “[...] **any use in which [the game] is broadcast or in any other way transmitted [to] other receiving devices.**”. The arbitrator implied the contract applied to anything **that could receive and transmit data (such as mobile devices, game consoles and more)**. As stood, **G.C.C. would now be owed royalties to any new Ms. Pac-Man release on any**

**new console**, sans arcade machines without coin slots. Namco Bandai is now obligated to fulfill contract without exception.

- January 21 and November 10: G.C.C. is awarded with damages due to Namco breaching contract on unpaid royalties.
- Following this event, G.C.C. was paid the overdue royalties owed to them by Namco Bandai. However, the presence of Ms. Pac-Man within new Namco productions began to greatly decrease in prominence.
- **WRITER'S NOTE:** My assumption is that Bandai Namco had decided to cease further usage of the Ms. Pac-Man characters and elements in which it was obligated for royalty payments to GCC, in order to whiff off any possible litigation in the future. Bandai Namco owes 7% of Ms. PAC-MAN sales to GCC as a result of the arbitration. (California Extreme 2024 panel)
- Ms. PAC-MAN for Xbox 360 is included in Namco Museum Virtual Arcade. This is the last time Ms. PAC-MAN is included in a home game console-based compilation title.

## 2010

- PAC-MAN's Arcade Party, an arcade compilation cabinet (which features several Namco-developed games such as Pac-Man, Pac-Mania, Galaga, Dig Dug, Galaxian, Galaga '88 and more) is released by Namco Limited (amusement division, now known as Bandai Namco Amusement). Ms. PAC-MAN is one of the many games included in the compilation cabinet, but *only* appears on the home arcade cabinets (the free-to-play cabinets without a coin slot), or if the coin-operated cabinets (with a coin slot) are set to Free Play mode. Ms. PAC-MAN artwork is only present on the home arcade models. This is the first arcade machine to set a recurring trend of the Ms. PAC-MAN game only being available if the machine does not accept payment, continuing to this day.

## 2013

- PAC-MAN's Arcade Party cabinet is featured in the Pac-Man and the Ghostly Adventures episode "The Adventure Begins – Part 1". The arcade cabinet uses the front artwork of the coin-operated cabinet, but the side art uses the home version artwork; which features Ms. PAC-MAN's sprite.

## 2014

- PAC-MAN MUSEUM is released for Microsoft Windows (via Steam), Xbox 360 (later available on Xbox One through Backwards Compatibility in 2016) and PlayStation 3 digitally. Ms. PAC-MAN is featured through DLC, which was free at launch but later became a paid \$4.99 USD DLC purchase one month after release. The version of Ms. PAC-MAN featured is based on the Namco Museum Battle Collection version.
- **WRITER'S NOTE:** The DLC route is considered to be part of the royalty contract, as Ms. PAC-MAN is not part of the PAC-MAN MUSEUM collection in full and is sold separately.
- The Nintendo 3DS and Wii U versions of PAC-MAN MUSEUM are cancelled due to "delayed development".

## 2015

- March 26: The 2001 Game Boy Advance version of Namco Museum (which features Ms. PAC-MAN) is released on the Wii U's Virtual Console service via the Nintendo eShop. This is currently the latest re-release of the Ms. PAC-MAN game in any capacity on a Nintendo console.
- G.C.C. (GCC Technologies) dissolves through disestablishment, but royalty contract still remains with all individual G.C.C. staff members.

## 2016

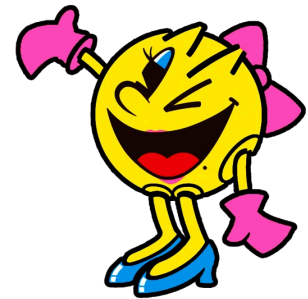
- April: ARCADE GAME SERIES: Ms. PAC-MAN is released for Microsoft Windows (via Steam), PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. Compared to the ARCADE GAME SERIES releases of PAC-MAN, GALAGA and DIG DUG, ARCADE GAME SERIES: Ms. PAC-MAN is **not** included in the physical "PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2 + ARCADE GAME SERIES" release or included in any digital bundles such as "ARCADE GAME SERIES 3-in-1 Pack" or "PAC-MAN COLLECTION". *This is currently the latest and only currently available mainstream console reissue/re-release of the original Ms. PAC-MAN game.* The ARCADE GAME SERIES releases are backwards compatible with PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X/S as well.
- Mega Run meets PAC-MAN is released for iOS/Android as part of the Namco Catalog IP project. This game features a Ms. PAC-MAN lookalike known as "**Pac-Man Girl**" (pictured), who is a female Pac-Man with a **lime-colored** bow. The character also lacks eyelashes, but also is eyebrowless similar to Ms. PAC-MAN's Japanese design. This character is playable alongside the original PAC-MAN character.
- PAC-STORE series of merch and pop-up stores begins, as well as an accompanying series of six animated shorts. Among Pac-Man, the PAC-STORE lineup introduces a new cast of characters to accompany PAC-MAN. Among the new characters is a female PAC-MAN character companion named **PAC-MARIE** (pictured). Her official description is mentioned to be a "longtime friend of PAC-MAN". Some artwork of PAC-MARIE created for the PAC-STORE is notably based on artwork originating from the original Bally Midway-era merch of Ms. PAC-MAN. Additionally, a character known as PAC-LITTLE, with similarities to Jr. PAC-MAN, also appears in the shorts and merch. Some pop-up stores featured Ms. PAC-MAN and Jr. PAC-MAN arcade cabinets. The PAC-STORE line was retired in 2019.



# 2018-2021: Renegotiations flushing down AtGames' way

## 2018

- PAC-MAN'S Pixel Bash, an arcade compilation cabinet, is released by Bandai Namco Amusement. Like PAC-MAN's Arcade Party, this compilation features the same lineup of arcade games as Arcade Party but with the addition of more Namco arcade titles. Ms. PAC-MAN is included in the compilation cabinet as well, but only appears on the home arcade cabinets or if the coin-operated cabinets are set to Free Play mode, similar to PAC-MAN's Arcade Party. Ms. PAC-MAN artwork is only present on the home arcade models.
- August: Bandai Namco Entertainment of America (to be abbreviated as **Bandai Namco**) and G.C.C. staff renegotiate over Ms. Pac-Man royalty contract. Bandai Namco had desired to begin reusing Ms. PAC-MAN with the then approaching 40th Anniversary of PAC-MAN. Talks went on for a year. Formal, written agreement by Bandai Namco was signed by most GCC successors around 2019.
- September: Ms. Pac-Man appears in Sonic Dash for iOS/Android as part of a crossover event. This is the last time Ms. Pac-Man appears as a playable character in an original video game.
- December 7: Ms. Pac-Man appears in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate as part of a cameo in the "PAC-LAND" stage. This is the penultimate time Ms. Pac-Man has appeared in an original video game unaltered, though this is the last time the character appears with the standard Ms. Pac-Man appearance.
- A new design of Ms. PAC-MAN (pictured) from recurring PAC-MAN artist Hideki Tanaami (PAC-MAN artist since 1998-present) begins appearing in advertising and licensed products such as merchandise, plug and play/retro handheld units, Arcade1UP machines and more. The new design of Ms, PAC-MAN bears closer resemblance to her depiction from the original Bally Midway artwork of the game. This new design of Ms. PAC-MAN has yet to appear on a mainstream game platform or mobile release so far, but continues active use in new products such as Arcade1UP devices and MyArcade retro handhelds.



## 2019

- June: Steve Golson, designer of Ms. PAC-MAN, is approached virtually by AtGames Cloud Holdings LLC (to be abbreviated as **AtGames**) CEO Ping-Kang Hsiung on the interest of licensing the Ms. PAC-MAN IP. (California Extreme 2024 panel)
- **NOTE:** AtGames had repeatedly desired to license Ms. PAC-MAN after a request from Walmart to obtain Ms. PAC-MAN products for their store.
- **BACKGROUND NOTE:** AtGames is a video game company manufacturer known for distributing dedicated retro plug-and-play game consoles featuring games from Atari, Intellivision and

ColecoVision. Naturally, it has also licensed several games from Bandai Namco. Bandai Namco had been working with AtGames since 2016.

- July 22-24: AtGames CEO PK Hsiung meets up with former GCC staff Steve Golson and Kevin Curran for a lunch. PK Hsiung makes an offer to obtain all of G.C.C.'s royalty interest in Ms. PAC-MAN.
- July 26: Bandai Namco learns that its business partner AtGames, a company that Bandai Namco had licensed several re-releases of their games to plug-and-play consoles, had begun talks with the G.C.C. staff in the interest to "obtain arcade rights" for Ms. Pac-Man from G.C.C. (Bandai Namco v. AtGames, 2019)
- **WRITER'S NOTE:** AtGames had produced the "BANDAI NAMCO Flashback Blast!" plug-and-play console, which advertised itself as having the original arcade versions of several classic Namco arcade games such as PAC-MAN, GALAGA, DIG DUG, XEVIIOUS, THE TOWER OF DRUAGA, SKY KID, MAPPY and more; the final product features emulations of the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and Family Computer (Famicom) versions of the games instead. Review copies of the "BANDAI NAMCO Flashback Blast!" had featured the original arcade versions. The product was negatively received by consumers and critics for its false advertising and inclusion of the NES/Famicom versions of each game as opposed to the arcade versions. The "BANDAI NAMCO Flashback Blast!" console was brought to light by Bandai Namco during the eventual AtGames lawsuit for "improper and wrongful conduct". In AtGames' defense, AtGames had mentioned they included NES/Famicom versions of the games on the box artwork; Bandai Namco had told AtGames to use the arcade version screenshots for the games on the box artwork, but did not tell them to change the playable NES/Famicom versions to the original Arcade versions.
- **WRITER'S NOTE:** AtGames had also produced the "Sega Genesis Flashback" plug-and-play console, which was negatively received by consumers for poor emulation of the games and inclusion of "shovel-ware" titles on the plug-and-play consoles. Sega announced a successor Sega Genesis Flashback console with AtGames, known as the "Sega Genesis Mini" at the Sega Fes Show in April 2018. In September 2018, Sega delayed the Sega Genesis Mini and removed AtGames from the project, instead producing the console in-house and having developer M2 produce the emulation for the console. The Sega Genesis Mini was released to positive reception by consumers and critics.
- Bandai Namco contacts AtGames over Ms. PAC-MAN concerns; AtGames denies any involvement with G.C.C.
- August 19: Bandai Namco contacts Kevin Curran of G.C.C. and learns from Curran that AtGames had contacted G.C.C. staff over Ms. PAC-MAN related rights, despite AtGames denying to Bandai Namco. Bandai Namco also learns that AtGames had sent the G.C.C. staff an AtGames-produced "Legends Compact" arcade machine featuring the Ms. PAC-MAN game (pictured), which was not authorized for release by Bandai Namco and had declined several proposals from AtGames related to the model previously. Bandai Namco also learns AtGames began advertising the unauthorized Ms. PAC-MAN Legends Compact mini-arcade cabinet to retailers such as Walmart and GameStop.



- **NOTE:** The products advertised were pitches but did not actually make it into retail. It is important to note AtGames did not have the rights to use the Ms. PAC-MAN IP.
- September 20: **Bandai Namco sues AtGames over the unauthorized Ms. PAC-MAN Legends Compact mini-arcade cabinet and unauthorized use of the Ms. PAC-MAN IP.** The “Bandai Namco Flashback Blast!” plug-and-play console coincidentally is pulled from sale.
- In between September 20-27: Bandai Namco offers an undisclosed “big” offer for the Ms. PAC-MAN royalty contracts. **However, AtGames’ PK Hsiung offers \$10 million USD** (amount mentioned in October 31, 2019 opposition) **for the Ms. PAC-MAN royalty stream** (amount is said to be higher than Bandai Namco’s offer per Steve Golson), **which G.C.C. accepts. AtGames acquires all Ms. PAC-MAN contracts from G.C.C. staff members.** (California Exeme 2024)
- September 27: **AtGames announces acquisition of all Ms. PAC-MAN contracts from G.C.C. staff.** Bandai Namco was **not** alerted or involved with the royalty contract transferring to AtGames. In AtGames’ press release, the acquisition is referred to as “Ms. PAC-MAN-related rights”.
- **NOTE:** AtGames acquired all Ms. PAC-MAN contracts owed to G.C.C., but they had **only obtained the royalties** owed to G.C.C. **Bandai Namco still owns the overall Ms. Pac-Man IP copyright,** including the games, characters and related. As such, Ms. PAC-MAN’s copyright still belongs to Bandai Namco, but royalty payments are now directed to AtGames as opposed to G.C.C. staff.
- October 17: Bandai Namco seeks injunction on AtGames to prohibit the company from engagement with Bandai Namco’s IP and the Ms. PAC-MAN property.
- October 31: Opposition court response from a counselor for Bandai Namco: **“In the meantime, to help AtGames make its decision, we take this opportunity to reiterate that, should AtGames acquire GCC’s interest in Ms. PAC-MAN, pursuant to current agreement with GCC, Bandai Namco can ensure that AtGames investment will be useless. AtGames can be promised that continued actions will be taken by Bandai Namco to ensure that there is zero income stream delivered pursuant that agreement, as has already been contemplated and decided by Bandai Namco, even prior to AtGames involvement in the situation.”** Effectively speaking, **Bandai Namco was prepared to stop using the Ms. PAC-MAN IP altogether.** Bandai Namco also does not have much evidence to prove AtGames had been distributing the unauthorized Ms. PAC-MAN products. (AtGames v. Bandai Namco)
- November 1: An actor cosplaying Ms. PAC-MAN appears in the PAC-MAN 40th Anniversary official music video JOIN THE PAC (Official Theme Song for PAC-MAN 40th Anniversary) by KEN ISHII.

## 2020

- May 22: Minecraft x PAC-MAN Marketplace world is released for Minecraft: Bedrock Edition. Multiple PAC-MAN characters, such as PAC-MAN, Miru from Pac & Pal, Jr. Pac-Man, Pac-Baby, Professor Pac-Man and more are featured as playable characters, but Ms. PAC-MAN is notably excluded.
- July 20: Multiple Bandai Namco games are delisted across all retailers. This notably includes various PAC-MAN products including PAC-MAN MUSEUM (as well as the Ms. PAC-MAN DLC) and the Xbox 360 version of Ms. PAC-MAN. Other Xbox 360 games like PAC-MAN, GALAGA and more were not delisted.

- November 4: Following delays in court progress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **court dismisses the Bandai Namco v. AtGames lawsuit with prejudice** as Bandai Namco and AtGames both resolve on their own ends. Details regarding the settlement were kept **confidential**. Lawsuit dismissed fully by December 21.
- AtGames' "Bandai Namco Flashback Blast!" plug-and-play console returns to sale on storefronts after the lawsuit dismissal. Bandai Namco continues to work with AtGames for existing products.
- Arcade1UP begins releasing Ms. PAC-MAN themed arcade cabinets, with the game included. Arcade1UP cabinets in general are made for home use only and do not include coin slots, always set to Free Play mode.
- **NOTE: The Ms. PAC-MAN and PAC-MAN games have yet to appear together on a single Arcade1UP cabinet. It is unclear so far how the current contract applies with Ms. PAC-MAN appearing in collections. On the Ms. PAC-MAN/GALAGA 20-Year Reunion Arcade1UP themed cabinet released in 2021, it does not include the PAC-MAN game.**
- December 21: Ms. PAC-MAN is mentioned by name in the 2nd Annual Comic-Con Museum Character Hall of Fame Virtual Induction Ceremony Celebrating PAC-MAN.

## 2021

- May 22: Bandai Namco unveils Ms. PAC-MAN 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plans with a new logo in a Japan-only press release.
- **NOTE: Under the Ms. PAC-MAN 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary branding, the only products released are Arcade1UP compilation arcade cabinets and merchandising products such as wardrobe. Due to the nature of the AtGames dispute, Bandai Namco has limited the exposure of the anniversary branding.**
- October 9: Ms. PAC-MAN Figuarts figure (pictured) announced by BANDAI Collectibles division TamashiiNations. Per MpaulZ, a BANDAI Collectibles representative on April 28, 2023 states that the Ms. PAC-MAN figure was quietly cancelled due to a "lack of interest".
- November 9: PAC-MAN: Birth of an Icon, a PAC-MAN retrospective history book was released for the 40th anniversary of PAC-MAN. Ms. PAC-MAN is mentioned by name multiple times throughout the book in regards to her history, but all arcade images are of Crazy Otto and not Ms. PAC-MAN. A confusing assortment of images have Ms. PAC-MAN cropped out as well, whereas some images have her perfectly intact. The Gameology section mentions all Ms. PAC-MAN games and also mentions cancelled titles such as Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness 2.
- **NOTE: Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness 2 is a cancelled sequel to the 2000 game Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness. The game was developed by TKO Software, but was cancelled when TKO Software went out of business.**
- **NOTE: Per Tim Lapetino (Birth of an Icon book writer), Lapetino had to fight with Bandai Namco's legal department for Ms. PAC-MAN's inclusion in the book overall. The book notably manages to feature art of Ms. PAC-MAN's cartoon counterpart "Pepper Pac-Man (nickname Ms. Pac)", from**



the 1982-1983 Hanna-Barbera produced cartoon series. The book writers were not allowed to use Ms. PAC-MAN imagery per Bandai Namco.



- November 19: PAC-MAN MUSEUM+, a PAC-MAN series compilation title, is announced for PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, Microsoft Windows (via Steam) and Nintendo Switch. The compilation title introduces **PAC-MOM** (pictured), a stand-in character for Ms. PAC-MAN, which is first seen in the game's cover art and announcement trailer. The character features a drastic design departure from the original Ms. PAC-MAN character, featuring white irises, a sun hat and pink gloves/boots. (The sunhat bears resemblance to the character Ms. PAC-MASTER from the 2005 Nintendo DS game Pac 'n Roll.) **PAC-BOY** and **PAC-SIS** (both pictured), stand-in characters for Jr. PAC-MAN and Baby PAC-MAN are also introduced in the trailer, being unnamed until the release date trailer in February 2022. Of course, the Ms. PAC-MAN arcade game is not part of the collection.
- Arcade1UP releases an Ms. PAC-MAN Arcade1UP cabinet themed after the Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga 20 Year Reunion arcade cabinet. Ms. PAC-MAN and GALAGA are part of the games included, but PAC-MAN is not. As with all other Arcade1UP cabinets, they are all for Free Play and do not feature coin slots.

# 2022-now: A Ms. gone “Mizz”-ing

You can tell this section is where i become desperate for bread crumbs

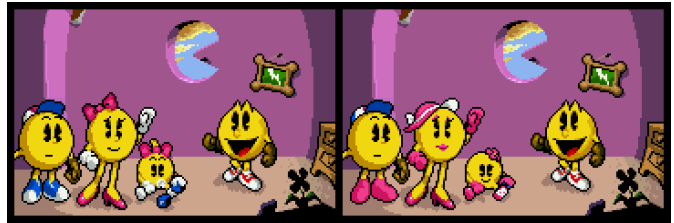
## 2022

- January 6: Ms. PAC-MAN as “Pac-Girl” (from PAC’N ROLL) appears in the Bandai Namco game “QuickSpot”, and shows prominently on the game’s key artwork. This is the last time Ms. PAC-MAN as a character appears within a console video game unaltered.
- **NOTE:** PAC’N ROLL is a PAC-MAN video game released for the Nintendo DS in 2005. The game’s story takes place in the PAC-MAN character’s youth and features a character named “Pac-Girl”, which is stated that “she will become the future Ms. PAC-MAN” in the official websites and game manuals.
- March 8: Ms. PAC-MAN and Pinky appear in promotional social media artwork for International Women’s Day. This is the latest occurrence of the primary Bandai Namco America social media accounts (Bandai Namco US, PAC-MAN Official) making use of their own artwork and mention of Ms. PAC-MAN. (Bandai Namco Amusement America continues to use Ms. PAC-MAN for certain products such as PAC-MANCAVE merchandising).
- April 6: **Ms. PAC-MAN, along with Jr. PAC-MAN and Baby PAC-MAN, begin to be edited out of PAC-MAN game re-releases on game consoles going forward.** PAC-LAND is re-released on Hamster Corporation’s digital-only Arcade Archives line for PlayStation 4 and Nintendo Switch. **The Arcade Archives version of PAC-LAND removes the appearances of Ms. PAC-MAN and Baby PAC-MAN.** PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS, characters created for PAC-MAN MUSEUM+, are now present in their roles (pictured). The name Arcade Archives is now inaccurate.
- **NOTE:** From the Arcade Archives director and producer [EZ\\_takayoshi](#) on Twitter (X), the edited ROM was provided by Bandai Namco and was surprised by the change of Ms. PAC-MAN’s sprites. The edited arcade ROM featuring PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS sprites in place of Ms. PAC-MAN and Baby PAC-MAN are suggested to have been created internally at Bandai Namco before being provided to Hamster Corporation for release. ([https://x.com/EZ\\_takayoshi/status/1511747370370838530](https://x.com/EZ_takayoshi/status/1511747370370838530))
- **NOTE:** Quote from Maurice Molyneaux (former Namco Networks developer) on Twitter (X): “Interesting. I was told B-N owned the character per se but they had to pay if they used any elements specific to the Ms. game. If that’s so, my guess is they’re just being extra cautious to avoid any whiff of litigation.” (in a tweet responding to Ms. PAC-MAN being edited out of PAC-LAND)
- Several news articles are reported by news platforms in regards to the removal of Ms. PAC-MAN. Multiple outlets request comment from Bandai Namco, G.C.C. and AtGames; all parties do not respond to inquiries about Ms. PAC-MAN.
- **WRITER’S NOTE:** One of my own tweets on Twitter (X) covering the earliest exposures of PAC-MOM had been widely featured in news publications such as Polygon, VGC, GameSpot and



more. Polygon had requested comments from Bandai Namco representatives, GCC staff and AtGames representatives, but none had responded.

- May 27: PAC-MAN MUSEUM+ is released. The collection **features the censored PAC-LAND version from Arcade Archives** with PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS, and also **introduces edited versions of PAC-ATTACK and**



- PAC-IN-TIME** (PAC-IN-TIME pictured, comparison between the original SNES release and MUSEUM+ versions) which also removes and replaces the appearances of Ms. PAC-MAN, Baby PAC-MAN and Jr. PAC-MAN (with PAC-MOM, PAC-SIS and PAC-BOY respectively) from all titles. A graphic of Ms. PAC-MAN appearing in the credits sequence for PAC-MAN Arrangement (CS. Ver (aka 2005)) remains unchanged and is not patched out in subsequent updates.
- June 28: PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC is announced for PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, Microsoft Windows (via Steam) and Nintendo Switch. This is a remake of Pac-Man World: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and prominently features Ms. PAC-MAN elements and characters. **Ms. PAC-MAN, Baby PAC-MAN and Jr. PAC-MAN are removed from the remake** and are replaced with PAC-MOM, PAC-SIS and PAC-BOY; three characters that were introduced in PAC-MAN MUSEUM+. PAC-MOM refers to PAC-MAN as “darling” in the game, implying she is PAC-MAN’s husband. Musical cues originating from Ms. Pac-Man still remain as seen in the trailers. The moving fruit mechanics from Ms. PAC-MAN are also removed from the maze minigames.
- July 29: Ms. PAC-MAN and Ms. PAC-MAN Lite for iOS/Android are silently **delisted** from the App Store and Google Play stores. Official pages are subsequently removed from the Bandai Namco YouTube and Pac-Man websites.
- August 27: PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC is released. Notable elements originating from Ms. PAC-MAN are removed such as the boss defeat jingle at the end of the HMS Windbag fight (which is an arrangement of the Ms. PAC-MAN start theme) and the moving fruit in the Maze Mode stages. The original Ms. PAC-MAN motifs present through the game’s original soundtrack however, remain intact.
- December 22: Ms. PAC-MAN’s cameo appeared in the PAC-PANIC (European/former Japanese name of PAC-ATTACK) port that is present on the AtGames Legends Flashback Console 2022 edition. Bandai Namco conducted business with AtGames on this product, even after the legal squabble that occurred, and the arcade royalty rights being obtained by AtGames.

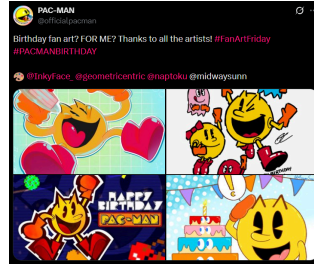
## 2023

- March 27: The Game Boy Advance version of Namco Museum for Wii U is delisted as a result of the closure of the Nintendo eShop for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U. This leaves current Nintendo platforms without an available release of Ms. PAC-MAN.
- April 21: NAMCO MUSEUM of ART, a 13 episode video series showcasing the source paintings and concept art of several Namco arcade games and series, showcases PAC-MAN in its 13th and final episode. The video shows several photos of the Ms. PAC-MAN game and art of the character.

- September: MyArcade releases a renewed line of portable Ms. PAC-MAN dedicated handheld players. The version of Ms. PAC-MAN included is an original homebrew version of the game developed for Sega Genesis/Mega Drive hardware and not the original arcade version, compared to past portable units using the Namco Hometek NES version.
- PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC public survey is conducted, survey sidesteps any mentions of Ms. PAC-MAN (games and character).

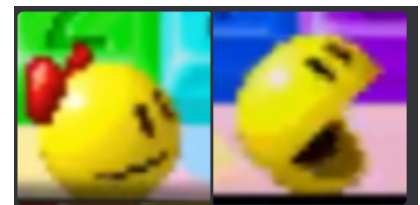
## 2024

- May 24: A collage of fanart was posted on the official PAC-MAN social media accounts to celebrate Pac-Man's 44th anniversary. Among one of the artworks is an artwork piece by artist *geometricentric* (on Bluesky as *geometricentric.bsky.social*, X (Twitter) account and source post has been taken down by X (Twitter) suspension), which features a group shot of several PAC-MAN characters: PAC-MAN, Blinky, Pinky, Inky, Clyde, Miru from PAC & PAL: and most notably, Ms. PAC-MAN. (pictured) This is the latest instance of Ms. PAC-MAN appearing on the primary American Bandai Namco social media accounts.



- **NOTE:** As explained in the 2025 time point (see below), usage of Ms. PAC-MAN in social media is considered allowed by Bandai Namco if the character is not used in the context of promoting consumer products. (Game File: The Best Interview I've Ever Done About Pac-Man) **ARTICLE PAYWALLED**

- July 11: Arcade Archives: Tinkle Pit, the first re-release of the previously Japan-exclusive Namco arcade game, is released for PlayStation 4 and Nintendo Switch internationally. **The Arcade Archives release removes all graphics of Ms. PAC-MAN in-game.** While no replacement designs were used, Ms. PAC-MAN's sprites were replaced with PAC-MAN's own sprites (pictured: the original Tinkle Pit on the left, and Arcade Archives on the right). In official streams from Hamster, Ms.



- PAC-MAN mentions are notably sidestepped by the Arcade Archives and Namco crew. Ms. PAC-MAN has a prominent appearance in the high score screen (where she appears in the likeness of other female Namco characters such as Ki from The Tower of Druaga, Valkyrie from Valkyrie no Densetsu, Sharon from Numan Athletics, Momo-chan from Wonder Momo, Leila from Rolling Thunder, Acha from Toy Pop and Waya Hime from Bravoman); the character replacement breaks the character consistency.

- **WRITER'S NOTE:** you are still beautiful pac-man

- Bandai Namco Amusement America releases a PAC-MAN's Pixel Bash arcade cabinet with artwork based on the Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga 20 Year Reunion cabinet. This cabinet was released only as a home version cabinet (with no coin slot).

# 2025

- January 9: My Arcade reveals the Gamestation Retro handheld with over 300 licensed games from Bandai Namco, Capcom and City Connection. Among the list of games is the Super NES/Sega Genesis game Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures, a game that features Ms. PAC-MAN and the Ms. PAC-MAN game. When the handheld was shown again a year later in January 2026 at CES, the game was removed from the Gamestation Pro's game lineup.
- April 22: Japanese Pac-Man X (Twitter) account promotes the presence of the replacement character PAC-MOM on Good Couples Day in Japan (pictured)
- **JAPANESE TEXT TRANSLATION:** Today is a good #couple's day 😊 Do you all know Pac-Mom 🤔 He is an important partner who is always by #Pacman's side 🥰 Pac-Mom and Pac-Man look great together 🌸 #Pacman
- June 17: In an interview covering the PAC-MAN spin-off game Shadow Labyrinth, Noah Paisek (PAC-MAN brand manager for Bandai Namco America) states he loves Ms. PAC-MAN and the character, but is notably tight lipped in regards to the character's future due to the legal issues. (Game File: The Best Interview I've Ever Done About Pac-Man) **ARTICLE PAYWALLED**
- July: Ms. PAC-MAN is acknowledged in the officially sponsored Shadow Labyrinth promotional section in the Japanese magazine Weekly Famitsu 1907, shown in a Pac-Man history subsection.
- July 31: PAC-MAN WORLD 2 Re-PAC, was announced via a Nintendo Direct: Partner Showcase presentation for Nintendo Switch/Switch 2, PlayStation 4+5, Xbox Series/One and Microsoft Windows. This is a remake of the original 2002 Pac-Man World 2 game, which featured some elements of Ms. PAC-MAN. The Ms. PAC-MAN character: who did not physically appear in the original game, but instead appeared as a cameo through a photo in PAC-MAN's house is replaced with a group shot of the PAC-Family from PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC's ending, featuring PAC-MOM. The PAC-MOM character also appears prominently throughout the game. The **Ms. PAC-MAN arcade game has been removed** from the classic game lineup in the Arcade, which was present in the original game; reducing the count of arcade games present within the arcade. Strangely, the layout of the first Ms. PAC-MAN maze used in The Bear Basics is left intact.
- September 5: The Ms. PAC-MAN Plug-and-Play console from MSI Entertainment is featured in a promotional advertisement for Pac-Man Ridge Wallet products.
- September 26: PAC-MAN WORLD 2 Re-Pac is released for PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Microsoft Windows, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch 2 and Nintendo Switch. As mentioned, the **Ms. PAC-MAN game has been removed and PAC-MOM prominently appears**, also replacing Ms. PAC-MAN's cameos in the cutscenes. The version of PAC-ATTACK included in the Arcade uses the same censored version from PAC-MAN MUSEUM+, featuring PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS replacing Ms. Pac-Man and PAC-Baby. The Golden Fruit featuring the Banana and Pear (which both debuted in Ms. PAC-MAN) are replaced with a Golden Orange and Melon from the original PAC-MAN game (pre-release artwork however, does make use of the Golden Banana and Pear). The game incorporates a new remix of Toc-Man's theme, featuring Ms. PAC-MAN leitmotifs.



- November 13: Atari releases “The Namco Legendary Pack” DLC for Atari 50: The Anniversary Celebration, a dedicated retro collection of Atari games for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Steam and Nintendo Switch. The Namco Legendary Pack features a curation of Namco games published for Atari consoles, including all Atari published versions of PAC-MAN, GALAXIAN, GALAGA, XEVIIOUS and DIG DUG included in the collection. Notably excluded from the collection are the Atari versions of POLE POSITION and of course, Ms. PAC-MAN; both which do not appear in the collection and are not part of the Namco history timeline. Mentions of the game and character however, are depicted in several advertisement flyers featured in the game’s interactive history timeline (this also includes screenshots and/or artwork of the Ms. PAC-MAN game, which are prominently featured in sections outside of the Namco DLC which does not feature Namco’s involvement). Notably, the game includes the Atari versions of Galaga and Dig Dug, which were developed by G.C.C., and also includes new interviews with the original G.C.C. staff in the Namco Legendary timeline.
- November 19: The music video PAC-MANISM from Japanese band Yabatan is released to promote a line of PAC-MAN brand collaboration t-shirts. In the music video, Ms. PAC-MAN and Jr. PAC-MAN arcade cabinets can be seen in the background.
- November 25: Bandai Namco US posts a Thanksgiving day collage featuring several Namco characters on X (Twitter). The PAC-FAMILY from PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC is shown, with PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS in place (the image featured intends to promote PAC-MAN WORLD 2 Re-PAC, but oddly uses a fan edit of their artwork from PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC which gives PAC-MOM and PAC-SIS the classic PAC-MAN pie-shaped eyes.). The post was shortly taken down and replaced with PAC-BUDDY on reupload.



## 2026

- My Arcade’s Gamestation Retro GO system is presented at CES 2026. As previously mentioned, the unit, which initially promised “Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures”, is no longer part of the game lineup.

This timeline will be updated as more appearances and/or depictions of Ms. PAC-MAN become available.

# Ownership status summary

Per the information available, this is what I have been able to draw from the current legal status of Ms. Pac-Man. It is also important to note that Bandai Namco considers PAC-MAN and Ms. PAC-MAN to be separate IPs due to the nature of the disputes. Please do note that some of this is based on speculation and may not be fully accurate to detail.



## What **applies** to the royalty contract (and what Bandai Namco is avoiding as much as possible):

- Usage of the Ms. PAC-MAN arcade game and original arcade code (ports that are based directly on the original arcade version) on arcade cabinets with a coin slot and mainstream game platforms such as game consoles, mobile/smartphone devices, and other such devices that accept payment.
  - o **NOTE:** The last time the arcade Ms. PAC-MAN game had been re-released on a modern mainstream platform was in April 2016 with ARCADE GAME SERIES: Ms. PAC-MAN. (Over 10 years ago)
  - o **NOTE:** Per former Namco Networks employee Maurice Molyneaux (developer for the original 2008 iOS version of PAC-MAN and later Ms. PAC-MAN): Molyneaux, who was present during the G.C.C. vs Namco arbitration in 2007, where these royalties appear to actually apply is the arcade ROM of Ms.PAC-MAN, where the source code reading “Hello Nakamura” is present.
- General merchandising. Some Ms. PAC-MAN branded furniture such as barstools and carpets continue to be sold through Bandai Namco Amusement’s PACMAN CAVE shop. It is the only officially licensed storefront that currently sells merchandise related to Ms. PAC-MAN as of 2025.
  - o **NOTE:** Per Steve Golson in California Extreme 2024, Ms. PAC-MAN appearing in merchandise was brought up during the 2006-2008 arbitration by G.C.C. Ms. PAC-MAN appearing in merchandising has a licensing revenue as part of the contract.

## What **does NOT** apply to the royalty contract:

- Usage of the Ms. PAC-MAN game on plug and play consoles, home versions of arcade machines (arcade machines without a coin slot) and retro handheld units. Plug and play consoles cannot “transmit” data, and as such are exempt from the contract language. Notable of these products are the Arcade1UP re-releases of the original Ms. Pac-Man arcade game, which are the only active stream of releases featuring the original Ms. PAC-MAN game. Bandai Namco compilation cabinets such as PAC-MAN’s Arcade Party and PAC-MAN’s Pixel Bash will also only allow play of Ms. PAC-MAN if Free Play mode is enabled, as a loophole to avoid royalty payments.
- Usage of Ms. PAC-MAN in promotional social media material.
  - o **NOTE:** The official U.S. PAC-MAN social media accounts have ceased most of all mentions of Ms. PAC-MAN after March 2022, however the Japanese social media accounts continue to feature Ms. PAC-MAN’s presence, such as the NAMCO MUSEUM of ART videos, reprint posters and the current sole modern release of the game on digital platforms, ARCADE GAME SERIES: Ms. PAC-MAN. Bandai Namco Amusement America

also occasionally creates joke posts regarding the legal status about Ms. PAC-MAN as the division is authorized to continue selling Ms. PAC-MAN products.

- **NOTE:** Noah Paisek (current North America brand manager for PAC-MAN) stated that he was allowed to use Ms. PAC-MAN in promotional contexts like the 2022 International Woman's Day artwork post, but is forbidden from using Ms. PAC-MAN in consumer product contexts. (Game File: The Best Interview I've Ever Done About Pac-Man) **ARTICLE PAYWALLED** The latest instance of Ms. PAC-MAN appearing on the primary American Bandai Namco social media accounts (BandaiNamcoUS, officialpacman) is a post on May 24, 2024, highlighting a fanart piece featuring Ms. PAC-MAN in a group shot with other primary PAC-MAN characters.
- Presence of Ms. PAC-MAN in pop up events. Pop-up arcades, shops and/or events prominently feature the original Ms. PAC-MAN arcade cabinet, home versions of PAC-MAN's Pixel Bash, Arcade1UP versions of Ms. PAC-MAN and retro handheld units.
- Depictions of the Ms. Pac-Man character's cartoon counterpart Ms. "Pepper" Pac-Man from the Hanna-Barbera TV series.

What remains in the air (not explicitly confirmed in the contract terms, but Bandai Namco takes action on depending on the scenario):

- Usage of original ports of the Ms. PAC-MAN game on mainstream game platforms such as game consoles and mobile/smartphone devices. The last Ms. PAC-MAN mainstream game console release occurred in 2016, and the sole mobile release of the game was delisted in 2022.
- Usage of the Ms. PAC-MAN game in compilations alongside the original PAC-MAN arcade game. Arcade1UP cabinets typically exclude Ms. PAC-MAN from being included together with PAC-MAN. The only exception is the PAC-MAN's PIXEL BASH home version arcade cabinets.
- Depicting screenshots of Ms. PAC-MAN.
- Usage of the Ms. PAC-MAN characters (Ms. PAC-MAN, Jr. PAC-MAN, Baby PAC-MAN and Sue) and elements (maze layouts originating from the game, bouncing fruit and randomized ghost behaviors).
  - **NOTE:** Per Steve Golson in California Extreme 2024, Ms. PAC-MAN appearing in non-Ms. PAC-MAN games was brought up during the 2006-2008 arbitration by G.C.C. The 1983 royalty contract mentions Namco has a royalty-free license to use the Ms. PAC-MAN character. (This may also indirectly tie to the Jr. PAC-MAN and Baby Pac-Man characters in relation to the original contract creation in 1983).
  - **NOTE:** Per former Namco Networks employee Maurice Molyneaux: Namco Networks was provided a "list of no-nos" from Bandai Namco when developing PAC-MAN + Tournaments (mobile PAC-MAN port that was active from 2013-2025) indicating the developers were not allowed to use game mechanics originating from Ms. PAC-MAN, such as moving fruit (in predetermined layouts), the maze layouts from the game and "randomized" ghost behaviors.
  - Some usage of Ms. PAC-MAN elements have continued use past the beginning of Ms. PAC-MAN elements being prohibited for use in new games:

- PAC-MAN Chomp Mania, a ticket redemption game released in 2013, features moving bonus fruit moving within the maze.
  - Ms. PAC-MAN's unaltered screenshot appearance in the credits for PAC-MAN Arrangement (2005) remains intact in PAC-MAN MUSEUM+ released in 2022, the first compilation to induct the removal of the Ms. PAC-MAN character
  - Box artwork for the Atari Lynx version of Ms. PAC-MAN appears in the Atari 50: The Anniversary Celebration's history timeline. (This part of the timeline was not endorsed by Bandai Namco; in Atari 50's Namco Legendary Pack DLC however, it makes use of Bandai Namco's guidelines including capitalization of the PAC-MAN name. Ms. PAC-MAN naturally does not appear in the officially licensed Namco Legendary timeline, though there are mentions of the character in a scan of the character being interviewed)
  - PAC-MAN Superfast, a mobile game released on YouTube Playables in 2024, notably includes a maze color palette based on Ms. Pac-Man's first maze.
  - PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2, released in 2016, features a moving Bonus Fruit, albeit enclosed in a bubble that moves farther from the PAC-MAN character's position. The game's re-release, PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2 PLUS, features a 2-Player mode called PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2 PLUS 2P which features bouncing fruit that can be popped from a bubble, but only reacts to gravity.
  - Shadow Labyrinth, a game developed by Bandai Namco Studios features bouncing Bonus Fruit in the PAC-MAN MAZE minigames. While they do feature moving fruit, they do not move in a determined path and rebound based on player physics.
  - PAC-MAN WORLD 2 Re-PAC, a remake that removed some Ms. PAC-MAN elements, notably retains the layout of the first Ms. PAC-MAN maze for The Bear Basics.
  - Sue, a character that originated from Ms. PAC-MAN, continues to be used in new PAC-MAN productions, though exclusively as the purple color ghost she has been depicted as since the Hanna-Barbera produced Pac-Man cartoon series.
- Music originating from Ms. PAC-MAN. PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC (2022), a remake of a game featuring Ms. PAC-MAN song leitmotifs, remained in place. This also applies to the remixed Toc-Man theme in PAC-MAN WORLD 2 Re-PAC (2025).
  - Usage of contents originating from Jr. PAC-MAN (1983) or Baby Pac-Man (1982). Jr. Pac-Man is a game also developed by G.C.C.; Jr. PAC-MAN features elements originating from Ms. PAC-MAN such as the Ms. PAC-MAN character, bouncing fruit/bonus items and randomized ghost behavior. Baby Pac-Man is not developed by G.C.C., but features Ms. Pac-Man.

- **NOTE:** Jr. PAC-MAN is not covered by the royalty contract, but features Ms. PAC-MAN. When the contract was formed, G.C.C. demanded royalties from Bally Midway for in the context of Ms. PAC-MAN and PAC-BABY (in this case, Jr. PAC-MAN) appearing in non Ms. Pac-Man games.
- **NOTE:** Jr. PAC-MAN was set to be included in the Super Pac-Man Collection plug-and-play unit from Jakks Pacific (released in 2006) as demonstrated at Toy Fair 2006, but was removed in the final product. Code from the unreleased port remains in some future Jakks Pacific plug-and-play units such as Retro Arcade featuring Pac-Man. It is important to note the arbitration happened in 2006. The game has not seen re-releases outside of ports for Atari consoles in the 1980s.

## Where to play or get Ms. PAC-MAN officially today?

The nature of the royalty dispute has reduced the exposure and re-releases of Ms. PAC-MAN. As after the arbitration, Ms. PAC-MAN has seen less frequent re-releases outside of dedicated arcade and handheld devices that are exempt from the agreement (the last major Ms. PAC-MAN re-release occurred almost 10 years ago as of 2026, making it the longest gap for any Ms. PAC-MAN re-release). Ms. PAC-MAN continues to see sales through dedicated handheld units, plug-and-play devices, and the wildly expensive Arcade1UP/PAC-MAN's Pixel Bash arcade cabinets.

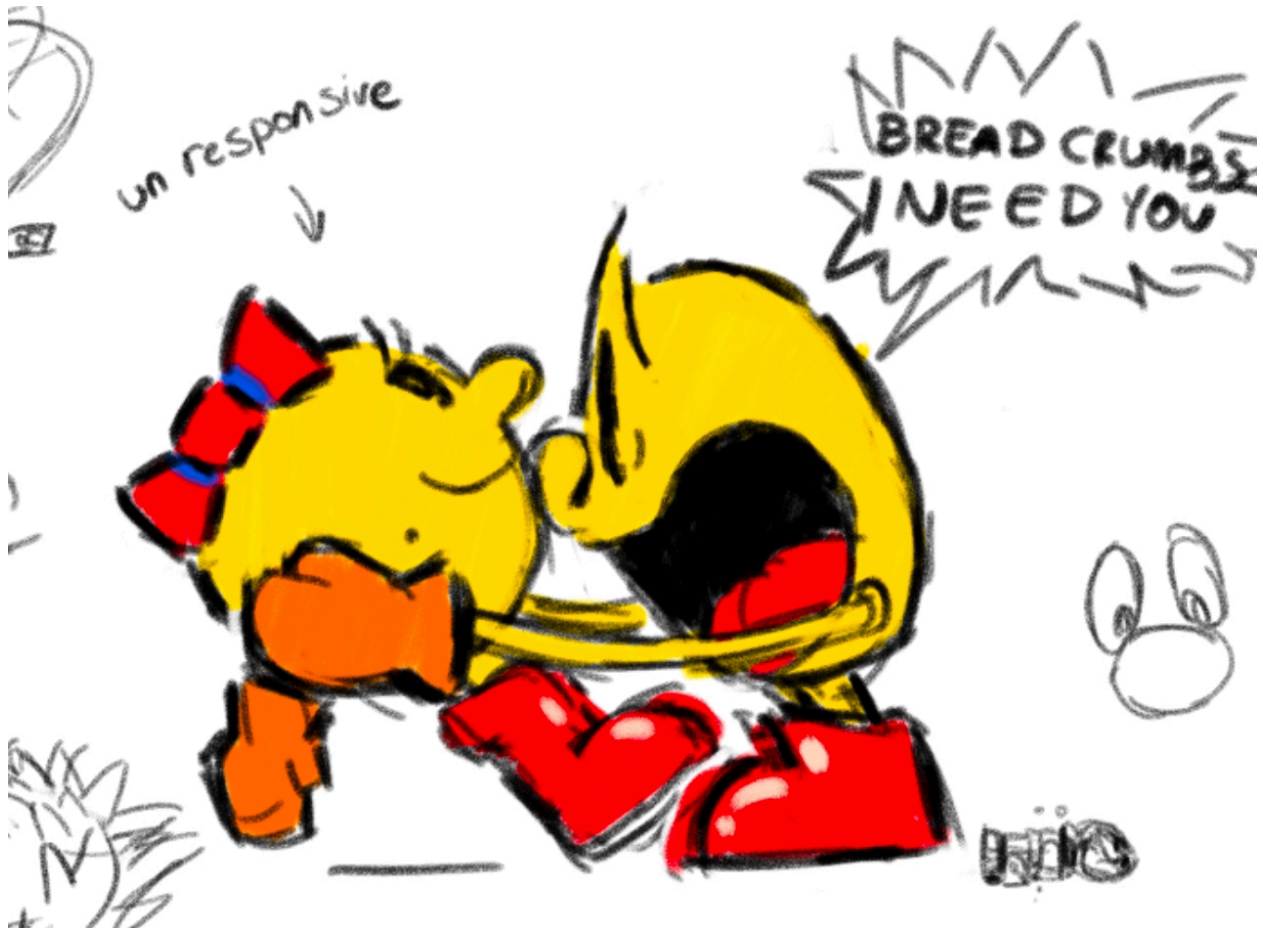
- PlayStation, Xbox and PC: On PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, and Microsoft Windows, the ARCADE GAME SERIES version of Ms. PAC-MAN is available for purchase digitally. This version of the game goes on sale frequently, but is typically excluded from any game bundles Bandai Namco offers. This is considered a last resort to get to play the original Ms. PAC-MAN ROM without selling an arm or a leg for an Arcade1UP/PAC-MAN's Pixel Bash machine.
- On Nintendo Switch: tough luck buddy. (no available releases)
- On mobile phones: tough luck again. (only available releases were delisted in 2022)
- On other non-mainstream devices: MyArcade sells Ms. PAC-MAN games through dedicated handheld devices, which do not feature the original arcade version, but rather a recreated version for Sega Genesis hardware. MSI Entertainment also sells Ms. PAC-MAN plug-and-play devices, though these feature the Nintendo Entertainment System version of the game instead.
- On Arcade machines: PAC-MAN's Pixel Bash, a Namco compilation cabinet features the original Ms. PAC-MAN, but only if the machine is set to Free Play mode. Arcade1UP also distributes various Ms. PAC-MAN themed cabinets with the original arcade ROM.

## My Closing Thoughts

Not only is Ms. PAC-MAN in a potential forever state of legal uncertainty, an icon and landmark in gaming is actively being erased and Bandai Namco is willing to put Ms. PAC-MAN, one of the first women in video games, on the chopping guillotine line. Not only are all parties guilty in this, it frustrates me as someone who's been introduced to Namco as a whole with Ms. PAC-MAN. Several Namco creatives and managers have also wished to be able to continue using Ms. PAC-MAN, but are silenced by Bandai Namco. The last 4 years have gave us quite a lot of answers, but with hints through GCC and the PAC-MAN WORLD Re-PAC survey, Bandai Namco Entertainment appears to simply want a future where Ms. PAC-MAN is dead.

Taking note from my pal MpaulZ, Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc, would much rather kill and desecrate the Ms. PAC-MAN IP purely out of spite, rather than preserve and continue honoring this game & character. She is inerasable from history and Bandai Namco's decision to continue this practice will forever be met with my personal resistance to this decision. I did not like covering this much at all but I hope this document was enough to give you context on the entire legal situation.

I'm so tired John Namco give us back the missus. get ahold of this bullshit please i cant take it anymore get the at games their dirty socks and resolve everything. bring her back bring her back bring her back bring her back *BRING HER BACK*



# Useful resources on the Ms. Pac-Man legal issues history

The following sources have been used for this timeline:

- [Bandai Namco Entertainment America Inc. vs. AtGames Cloud Holdings LLC](#), 2019-2020; all legal documents involving the Ms. PAC-MAN IP dispute.
- [The Disappearance of Ms. Pac-Man](#) by Jonii Vee, 2020
- [The Erasure of Ms. Pac-Man](#) by Jonii Vee, 2025
- [GDC Classic Game Postmortem - Ms. Pac-Man](#), 2016, presented by General Computer Corporation developer and Ms. PAC-MAN designer Steve Golson
- [Lawyers, Games and Money - General Computer Goes to Court](#), 2024; presented by General Computer Corporation developer and Ms. PAC-MAN designer Steve Golson at California Extreme
- [The Ms.PAC-MAN Summary](#) by MpaulZ
- [Arcade Archives director ez\\_takayoshi discussing the edited PAC-LAND ROM](#) in Arcade Archives: PAC-LAND by ez\_takayoshi and Ryan Silberman, 2022
- [Trilobyte Systems](#), personal website of General Computer Corporation developer and Ms. PAC-MAN designer Steve Golson featuring a number of presentations related to the creation of Ms. PAC-MAN and G.C.C.'s lawsuits

---

## Pac-Man Wiki Trivia

- In claims somewhat unrelated to both main portions of the lawsuit, AtGames claimed in the 2019 case that a Ms. Pac-Man "Blast!" console was once in the works, and was properly approved by Namco. However, the console was never released; and in reality, Namco merely said that they were "okay with" the concept, with no further discussions past that. (will integrate this into the timeline when verified)
- [I personally ratio'd the japanese pac-man twitter](#)
- Pac-mom is ugly