

APX ATARI® PROGRAM EXCHANGE



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Brad Stewart

LOAD 'N GO

APX-20037

User-Written Software for ATARI Home Computers



LOAD 'N GO

by

Brad Stewart

USER INSTRUCTIONS
9/1/81

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

With LOAD 'N GO you can automatically start a BASIC program at the time you power up your computer, approximating a turn-key system (that is, a computer system dedicated to a single application). To set up the automatic program execution, you run the LOAD 'N GO program once. LOAD 'N GO asks you to enter a RUN or LOAD command for the BASIC program you want executed automatically. It then creates an AUTORUN.SYS file that executes your program whenever you turn on your computer and boot the program diskette.

Here are a few of LOAD 'N GO's many uses.

- (1) If you have a diskette with several programs that you routinely use at different times, you can write a menu display program for these files and then have LOAD 'N GO automatically display the menu upon powerup. Such a system masks the usual steps for loading in and executing a program and thus streamlines routine activities. Using LOAD 'N GO in this way also makes your programs easier for non-programmers to use.
- (2) You can use LOAD 'N GO to autoexecute a particular program on a diskette so that novice computer users need only insert your program diskette, turn on the disk drive, and power up the computer to begin using your program.
- (3) You can use LOAD 'N GO to perform initialization chores, such as changing the video screen margins or color, or initializing peripherals (e.g., controller jacks).
- (4) You can protect other files on a diskette from being accessed by users if you include POKE commands in your BASIC program to disable the BREAK key and to change the SYSTEM RESET key so that pressing it causes a cold start. You then use LOAD 'N GO to autoexecute your program. The sample application at the end of these instructions shows one method for obtaining such protection.

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

16K RAM
ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

GETTING STARTED

1. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the (Left Cartridge) slot of your computer.
2. Turn on your disk drive and insert the LOAD 'N GO diskette.
3. Power up your computer and turn on your video screen.
4. At the READY prompt, type RUN "D:LOADGO" and press the RETURN key. If you're using more than one disk drive, remember to follow the device initial (D) with the number of the drive containing the diskette (e.g., RUN "D2:LOADGO" for disk drive two). LOAD 'N GO will load into RAM and start.

USING LOAD 'N GO

The following message and prompt then display:

```
AUTORUN BUILD PROGRAM FOR BASIC  
DOS VERSION 2.X
```

```
ENTER COMMAND ?
```

Enter the RUN or LOAD command to call the BASIC program you want automatically executed and press the RETURN key. For most applications, you'll want to use a RUN command rather than a LOAD command. For example, to boot automatically a program named CHECKING.BAS, answer the prompt with RUN "D:\CHECKING.BAS" <RETURN>. (Important Note. Remember to end the command with the closing quotation mark. Otherwise, an ERROR 170--File Not Found--message will display when you try to autoexecute your program.) Your command can be as long as 128 characters.

After you enter this information, LOAD 'N GO creates an AUTORUN.SYS file on the diskette in disk drive one. Therefore, how you answer this prompt depends in part on how many disk drives you use.

If you use one disk drive:

If you use only one disk drive, this AUTORUN.SYS file must be on the same diskette as the program to be run automatically. Therefore, after loading LOAD 'N GO into RAM, remove the LOAD 'N GO diskette and insert the diskette containing your program to be run automatically. Then enter the RUN or LOAD command in response to the prompt and press the RETURN key (e.g., RUN "D:\CHECKING.BAS" <RETURN>). LOAD 'N GO will create the AUTORUN.SYS file on the diskette containing your program.

If you have more than one disk drive:

Decide which disk drive you'll routinely use to insert your program diskette and then specify that drive number in your RUN or LOAD command. For example, if you always intend to insert your program diskette in disk drive two, then enter that device initial and number in front of the file name (e.g., RUN "D2:\CHECKING.BAS" <RETURN>). LOAD 'N GO creates the AUTORUN.SYS file on the diskette in disk drive one, but your command specifies which drive contains the program to be autoexecuted.

Warning. Because LOAD 'N GO creates an AUTORUN.SYS file, you can't have another AUTORUN.SYS file on the diskette in disk drive one. If an AUTORUN.SYS file is on the diskette, LOAD 'N GO will replace it with its own AUTORUN.SYS file.

AUTOMATIC PROGRAM LOADING

Once you use LOAD 'N GO to designate the program you want executed upon powering up, you don't need to use LOAD 'N GO anymore for that particular application. From then on, you simply insert the diskette containing the AUTORUN.SYS file in disk drive one (and your program diskette in the specified disk drive, if your program is on another diskette) and power up your computer. The program will autoexecute.

To stop the automatic loading of a program, you can either delete the AUTORUN.SYS file using DOS option D (DELETE FILE), or you can rerun LOAD 'N GO and specify a different file to be loaded from the same diskette. The new AUTORUN.SYS file created will replace the former one.

EXPERIMENT WITH LOAD 'N GO

You can use other BASIC commands with LOAD 'N GO. Because BASIC resumes control at some points, results aren't always predictable. Experiment to see what else you can do with LOAD 'N GO!

SAMPLE APPLICATION

Suppose you want to perform the following activities each time you power up your computer with a particular diskette:

- (1) disable the BREAK key
- (2) reset the SYSTEM RESET key to cause a cold start
- (3) load in and start a program (the program asks the user to input a number; it then generates that number of random notes, each note for a random length of time)

You can use LOAD 'N GO to autoexecute this program. The program itself looks like this:

```
10 REM  LOAD 'N GO DEMO
20 REM
30 REM  TURN SYSTEM RESET INTO RE-BOOT MECHANISM
40 REM  *****
50 POKE 580,1
60 REM  DISABLE BREAK KEY
70 REM  *****
80 POKE 16,64:POKE 53774,64
90 REM  MAIN PROGRAM LOOP
100 REM *****
110 PRINT CHR$(125);"INPUT NUMBER OF NOTES (0 TO EXIT)";:INPUT N
120 IF N=0 THEN 200
130 FOR I=1 TO N
140 SOUND 0,INT(RND(0)*255),10,8
150 FOR TD=1 TO INT(RND(0)*100):NEXT TD
160 NEXT I
170 SOUND 0,0,0,0
180 GOTO 110
200 REM RESET BREAK AND SYSTEM RESET TO NORMAL
210 *****
220 POKE 580,0:POKE 16,192:POKE 53774,192
220 REM THAT'S ALL FOLKS!
230 *****
240 END
```

(Remember that the computer re-enables the BREAK key after any serial bus I/O operation, or after changing graphics modes, so you'll need to include the POKE commands in your programs at appropriate points.)

You save this program on the diskette in disk drive one and name the file NOTES.BAS The command is SAVE "D:NOTES.BAS". Next, you load the LOAD 'N GO program into RAM as described in the GETTING STARTED section and answer the prompt as follows:

AUTORUN BUILD PROGRAM FOR BASIC
DOS VERSION 2.X

ENTER COMMAND ?RUN "D:NOTES.BAS" <RETURN>

LOAD 'N GO then creates an AUTORUN.SYS file on the diskette, which automatically executes the commands in your NOTES.BAS file. That is, whenever you power up your computer with this diskette in disk drive one, the program NOTES.BAS automatically executes.

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ATARI PROGRAM EXCHANGE

REVIEW FORM

We're interested in your experiences with APX programs and documentation, both favorable and unfavorable. Many software authors are willing and eager to improve their programs if they know what users want. And, of course, we want to know about any bugs that slipped by us, so that the software author can fix them. We also want to know whether our documentation is meeting your needs. You are our best source for suggesting improvements! Please help us by taking a moment to fill in this review sheet. Fold the sheet in thirds and seal it so that the address on the bottom of the back becomes the envelope front. Thank you for helping us!

1. Name and APX number of program _____

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

3. What do you especially like about this program?

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate and/or comprehensive?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program?

- _____ Easy to use
- _____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
- _____ Enjoyable
- _____ Self-instructive
- _____ Useful (non-game software)
- _____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

11. Other comments about the software or user instructions:

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