

EPT – Rainbird Software 1988

Developed by Andy Beveridge, Adrian Stephens and Ricardo Pinto.

This document and the EPT ST disk image (vS25c, 15th Feb '88) is ONLY available from <http://birdsanctuary.co.uk>. Please do not link to or offer these files for download on any other web site.

Introduction

This document describes how to see and do as much as you can in as short a period of time as possible. The game can't actually be played as such, but you can experience some of the tasks that the player would have performed.

For full background information and details about the game, please refer to the separate EPT documentation PDFs.

Loading

Boot **ept.st** in your preferred Atari ST emulator. We recommend Steem (Windows XP) as you can easily 'accelerate time' outside of the game, but you can also use SainT or Hatari.

The game requires an emulated 1Mb Atari ST (although the final version would have run on a half a meg machine). It should work with most Atari ST TOS files.

Travelling and Docking



Select this icon to pull down the Deep Space Navigation. Click on the third green rectangular button along the bottom to select Mangoran (Figure 1).

If you're curious, you can always click on the other buttons and see what other destinations are available.

In the final game, you would have only be able to travel to a few destinations at the start of the game. Upgrades to the navigational system would have yielded additional destinations as the game progressed.



PISATCH
(shows all objects
within 2gu's of
ship)

Figure 1 - Setting course for Mangoran

You can now see the distance to Mangoran (7884gu's) and the estimated time of arrival (note that the ship's calendar begins on 1987.01.01!).



Select this icon to engage the ship's Auto Pilot. After the ship has turned and begun accelerating away, the Cryogenics will then be activated automatically.

About a minute later, the Cryogenics will deactivate and the Auto Pilot will abort. A green planet should now be in view from the ship's cockpit (Figure 2).

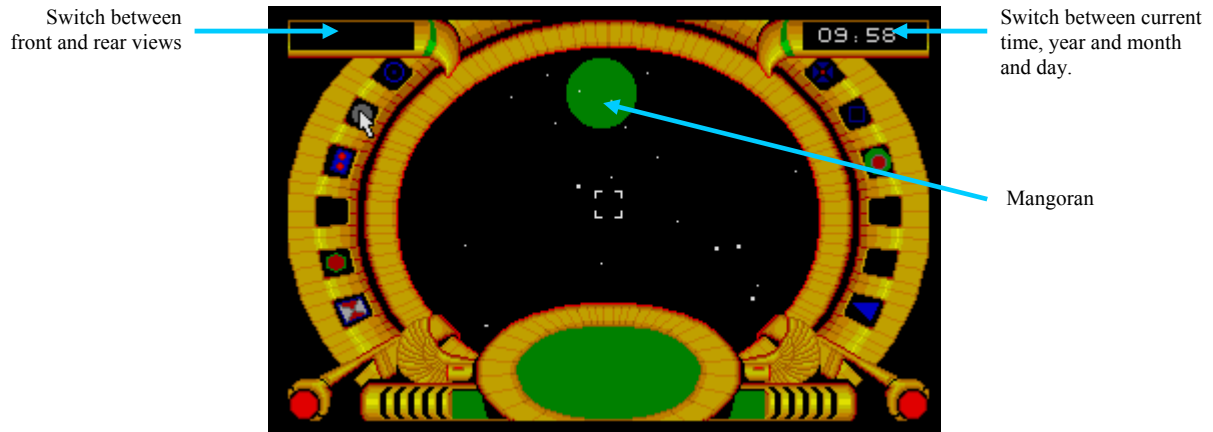


Figure 2 - Approaching Mangoran

You can check to see the current distance to Mangoran by selecting the Deep Space navigation again.

The ship's speed will remain constant when Auto Pilot and Cryogenics have disengaged. The only difference is that the ship can now be controlled manually.

Manual control is broken into two components – acceleration/deceleration and pitch/yaw. In this development version, these are controlled separately (Figure 3).

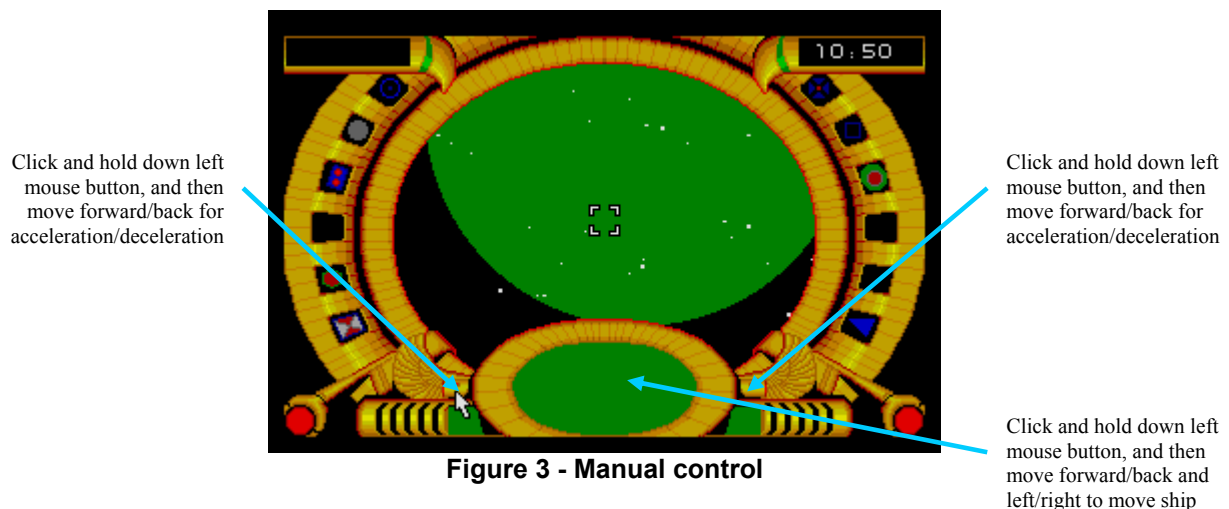


Figure 3 - Manual control

Once you are within 12gu's then it's time to take manual control. You now need to find a Skywheel (aka space station) to dock with.

Unfortunately, nothing shows up on the ship's PISATCH until they are within 2gu's of your ship, so you must fly around and keep your eyes peeled!

The Skywheel will look like a grey blob from a distance, but will take on a blue appearance the closer you get to it.



Figure 4 - Skywheel

- Once you've seen a Skywheel (Figure 4), manually accelerate towards it. When you are close enough, engage Auto Dock by selecting the blank icon on the left of the display.



Figure 5 - Auto Dock

A countdown will appear in the middle of the screen (Figure 5), and control of your ship will switch to automatic until docking is complete.

Once you are docked, you will automatically be presented with Nodes (Figure 6). These represent the various locations you can visit whilst visiting the Skywheel.

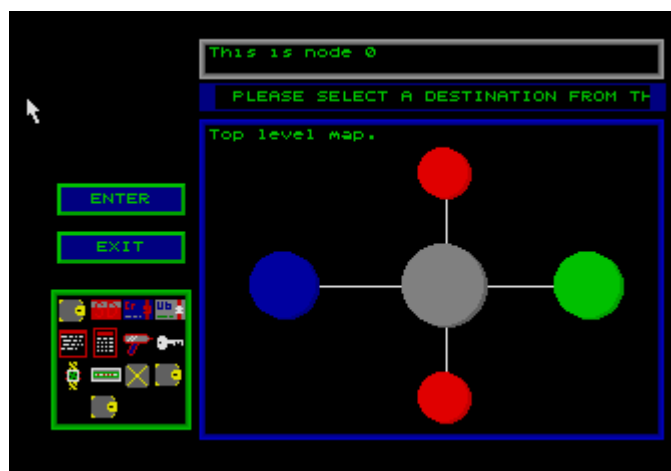


Figure 6 - Mangoran nodes

Note that the on-screen graphics and text are temporary and doesn't necessarily reflect the graphics and text that would have appeared in the finished game.

Click on a node (the colours represent different types of location) and then click on 'Enter'. With any luck, you'll then be at a Bank or a Shop where you can click on a few more icons or buttons.



Figure 7 - Urth Banker

(For some reason, the characters don't have ears in this version, so you can say whatever you like as they can't hear you!)

Unfortunately, you can't 'Exit' whilst you are here so if you wish to return to your spacecraft then the only option is to reboot the emulator and load the disk in again!

NB: If you boot the game from scratch and simply press **F10**, you can also enter some Nodes without having to seek out another Skywheel first!

Combat

Boot the game disk, and then simply press the Spacebar to begin zapping! The ship's energy weapons will overheat if used too frequently, so go easy on your trigger finger!



Figure 8 - Lasers



You can also launch a missile by pressing the blue triangle icon on the right of the cockpit display.

There are a number of other ships in the vicinity when you begin the game, so feel free to fly around and engage a few in combat!

Different ships

To see what the cockpit of some of the other spaceships in EPT look like, simply press the function keys F1 to F6!

Keys Summary (Atari ST)

With the exception of the pause/unpause function and shooting lasers, all of the below are debugging keys that wouldn't have been left in the finished product.

F1 to F6 – Switch ship cockpits

F10 – Enter Nodes

Backspace – Pause/Unpause

Tab – Halt all ship's acceleration (including your own)

Spacebar – Shoot energy weapons

Other functions

Where would the fun be if we told you everything else that you can or cannot do in this development version of EPT? Try clicking on a few icons and see what happens! If things start going wrong, just re-boot the emulated ST and start again!

Earlier version

Just to give you a peek at an earlier development version of EPT, here are some select screenshots from v0.60, dated 24th April 1987.

