

... a little game of strategy

Background

It was a normal day for the people aboard the starcruiser *Sirius Leap*. At least until the cook had the brilliant idea of protecting the galactical environment. Instead of dumping all kitchen waste into open space, he thought of a better idea. The cruiser was powered with one of these ultra-brand-new matter-antimatter engines, the physics of which escapes the scope of this report.

Anyway, all the cook knew about the engines was that they produced a tremendous amount of heat. And yes, instead of just dumping the waste, he thought of burning it first. Nothing easier than that, just throw it into the mattering-chamber, he thought.

Unluckily, before he could do that, he had to open the chamber, breaking the magnetic seal that kept the anti-matter core neutralized. Emergency measures contained the resulting catastrophe long enough for everybody to rush to the life-capsules and bail out. The *Sirius Leap* had four capsules that as soon as they disengaged tried to put as much nothing between them and the mothership as possible. But when the cruiser blew, the shockwave hurled the four capsules far, far away into the black nothingness.

Object Of The Game

It is the object of the game to find the four lost capsules that are somewhere out in the galaxis. A turn consist of trying to figure out where a capsule might be and then sending a rescue ship to this place. If there is no capsule at this place, the rescue ship will return with some data about how many capsules can be detected from this place. It is this data that you have to process carefully to win the game.

Requirements

Since this game was written as a Christmas present for my girlfriend (see also **XMasWare - What's That?**), I designed it to specially complement her Mac which happens to be a Macintosh LC, equipped with a 16 grayscale monitor and System 7. Alas, here are the minimum requirements to run Galaxis:

- 16 grayscales (4 Bit)
- System 7
- 4 Megabytes of RAM
- 68020 Processor

This means it should run fine on any of the following Macs: LC, SE30, Classic II, Mac II, IICx, IICI, IIFx, Quadra.

How To Play Galaxis

The Galaxis

In order to facilitate the rescue mission, the galaxis has been divided into a grid of 20x9 sectors. In each of these a capsule may be found. If you begin the game, you have no clue where a capsule might be. But with each turn you can narrow down their location until you find them.

A Turn

To look for a capsule in a certain sector, you double-click it. A rescue ship will be sent there. If it finds a capsule, the computer will display it on the screen and rescue it.

On the other hand, if there is no capsule, the rescue ship will scan the galaxis and report how many capsules it can see from its position.

The Rescue Ship

You send a rescue ship to a certain sector if you double-click on it (the sector, of course!). If a capsule is found, it is recovered. This doesn't take long so this is *not* counted as a turn. If there is no capsule in this sector, the ship turns on its scanners to scan the galaxis for the capsules. The number detected is reported back. *This scanning takes so long that it counts as a turn.*

However, to facilitate good results, there are two things that have to be observed:

1. The scanners work only on the so-called main axis, i.e. the horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines. This means that only those capsules will be detected that are positioned *exactly* in one of the directions illustrated in fig. 1:

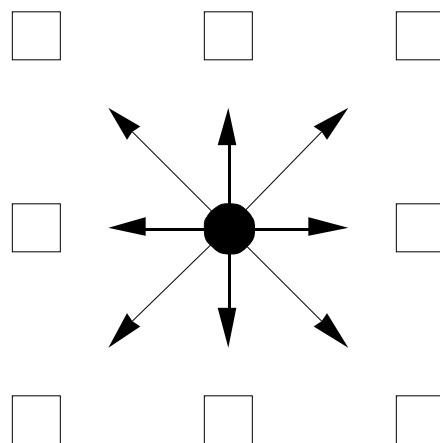


Fig.1 : Scan-Directions

2. A capsule eclipses all other capsules that might be on the same line of sight:



In above example, the rescue ship would be able only to detect the first capsule, since the second one is eclipsed by the first.

The number of detected capsules is entered automatically on the screen.

Blanks

To simplify the process of eliminating sectors, you can use so-called *Blanks*. You place these blank on the screen just for informational purpose. Placing them represent no real action and therefore the placement of one or many blanks does *not* count as a turn. If for example a rescue ship reports that no capsules can be seen from its sector, you can place a blank on all sectors that can be seen from the ship's position. You place and remove a blank simply by clicking on the sector. The correct use of blanks is the key to a successful game.

Other Functions

What Do I See From Here?

Especially beginners have some difficulties visualizing which sectors can be seen from where. More experienced players might quickly want to verify if a certain sector can be seen from a specific position.

This can be done by pressing the option-key and clicking on a sector. All sectors that can be seen from there are shown. Use of this function does *not* count as a turn.

Multiple Blanks

Sometimes you want to blank out many sectors, not just one. To do this, click on the starting sector and drag to the ending sector you want to blank out. All sectors will be blanked.

Note that the line of blanks aligns to the main directions from the starting field. This is to ensure that you will not accidentally blank out wrong sectors.

Of course, the use of this Function does *not* count as a turn.

Blanking an Indicator

Sometimes while playing you might find it useful to ignore an indicator (i.e. one of those messages that tell you how many capsules can be seen from a given position) .

To do this, simply double-click on the indicator. It will be replaced with a framed black rectangle. To see again what the indicator originally said, simple double-click on it again.

Diagonal Lines

Some players prefer a playing field that contains only the horizontal and vertical but not the diagonal lines. Use the 'Diagonal Lines' item in the 'Settings' menu to switch between the two.

Sound

OK, not everybody likes the sound effects as much as I do. To turn them off, use the 'Sound'-item in the 'Settings' Menu. If you don't like the sound at all, remove the file 'Galaxis Sounds' from the folder Galaxis is in. The Sound menu will get dimmed and no Sound played.

Frame Found

For those of you who have difficulties seeing the cute little capsule picture, I have included this option. If active, a white frame is placed around the capsule marker.

Clearing The LowScores List

Galaxis automatically saves the five best rescue missions. To reset this list (i.e. to remove your little sister/brother from it), simply trash the file 'Galaxis Scores'.

Saving And Loading A Game

Like in any other game, use 'Save...' in the 'File' menu to save it to disk and 'Load' to restore it.

Starting A New Game

To begin a new game use 'New Game...' in the 'File' menu.

Multiplayer/Network Game

A future version of Galaxis will include a multiplayer option in which each player will hide four capsules and the other player has to try to find them as fast as possible. If the response is big enough I will attempt implementing this.

The Tutorial Game

To make things easier for new players, I have included a tutorial game. It is a saved game to enable you to reproduce the things I'm trying to show you now. So let's begin with the tutorial:

In order to enable you to identify the sectors i'm talking about, i've taken the liberty to label the horizontal lines 'A' to 'T' and the vertical '1' through '9'.

A turn now will consist of two coordinates and a result that I want you to reproduce: 'I-6:2' thus means that I double-clicked on the sector I-6. The rescue ship found no capsule and reported that it saw two capsules. If you do this now, the result should look something like this:

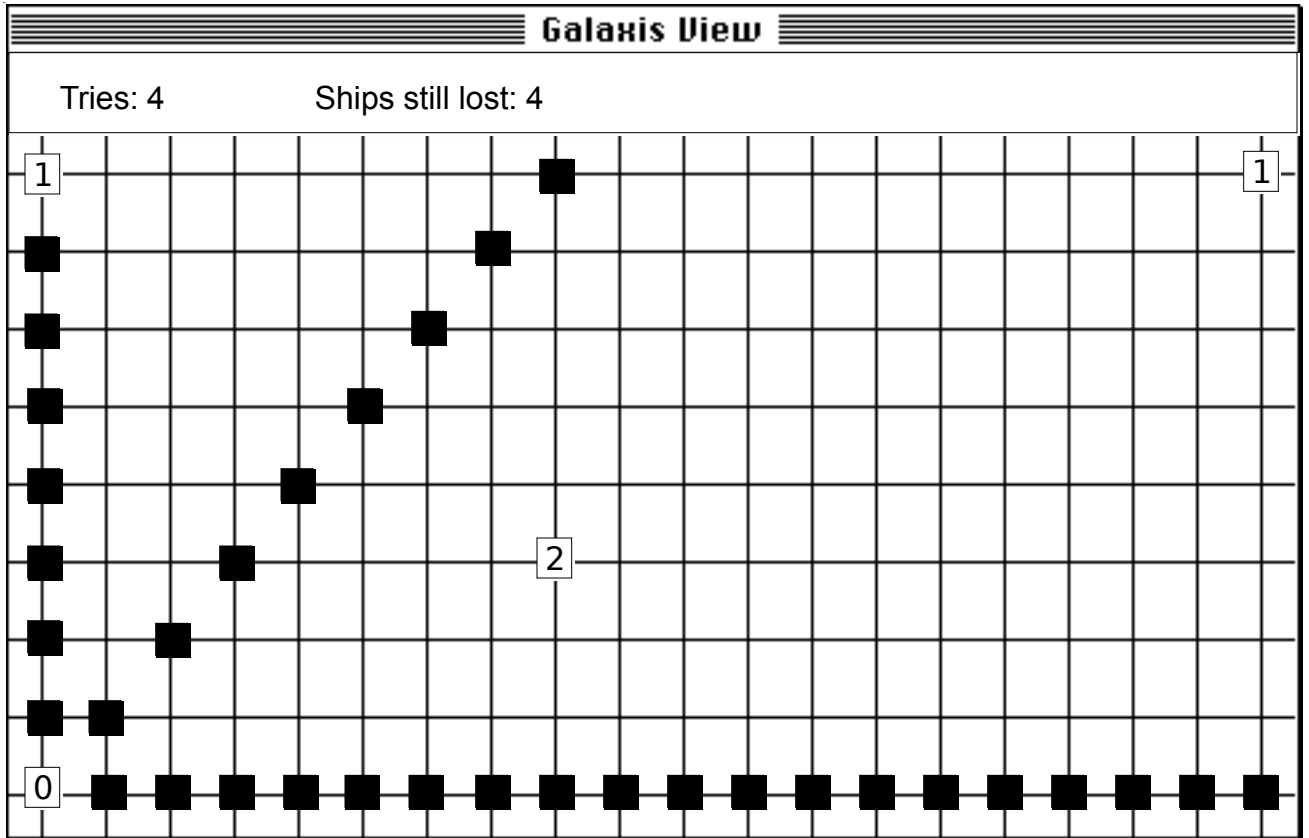
Galaxis View																				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6									2											
7																				
8																				
9																				

Now, lets execute the three following turns:

A-1:1
T-1:1
A-9:0

The last turn requires some additional work:

Since no capsules can be seen from A-9, we can blank out all sectors that can be seen from here. To find out which sectors can be seen, use option-click on A-9 and blank out all sectors that get shown. After blanking out all those sectors, your screen should look something like this:



Instead of blanking all sectors individually you could of course also have used the click-and-drag blanking function described above..

A final word to the blanks:

You should use blanks as often as possible. There are more occasions than when a '0' is reported where you can use blanks.

XMasWare - What's That?

This Program was written as a Christmas present for my girlfriend Barbara Wedekind. If you like it, please send a postcard to

Barbara Wedekind
Friedensallee 73
D-2000 Hamburg 50

(West) Germany

after Christmas '91 (not before, since it should be a surprise). I have invested lots of time into this game and would be very grateful if you reward my efforts with a little postcard to Barbara. Thanks alot.

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Bug-Reports And Improvement Hints

No program is perfect. If you have any bug-reports or improvements you would like to see, send them to cfranz@iic.ethz.ch. Please use the enclosed Bug-Report Form whenever possible.

Zürich, December 1991