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Reviewed by: Brandon Miquel & Misha

Sakellaropoulo

Escape Velocity is the highly popular new game from Ambrosia Software, the people who brought us Maelstrom, Barrack, and many more great games and utilities. It overlaps several genres, including elements of strategy and action games, a twist on good old fashioned space trading (Galactic Trader, anyone?), and some role playing. It includes a wide variety of ships and ship upgrades to buy, so as you gain money from trading, you can work your way up to a top-notch fighter and gain fame as a pirate hunter... or a pirate.

When you develop a good enough reputation (for battle and legal status), you must make a decision - go with the Rebels, who just want to be treated fairly, or work for the blood-sucking Confederation. Each side of the galactic civil war has it's own ship designs, and your choice will not only decide which ships you will be able to buy (eventually), but also which weapons you will be able to acquire along the way. It's a tough choice, and once you make it, there's no turning back. Allowing you to take multiple paths greatly added to the replay value of this game, so the couple of hours you spend downloading it will lead to dozens, even hundreds (if you're real a fanatic) of hours of playing time. How many games have you played that much? Not since Civilization have I seen a game so addictive, and I have never seen any other game that can virtually take over USENET newsgroups, let alone two of them (comp.sys.mac.games.strategic and comp.sys.mac.games.action).

Memory-hungry. Version 1.0.1 required 6000 k of RAM, and it played fine on an 8 MIB system, but if you have a PowerMac or a lot of extensions, you may not have enough memory. The just released version 1.0.2 "recommends" that you allocate it 8.3 megabytes of RAM. While the game does run with only 6 megs of RAM, some features, including sound may disabled. However game play is affected very little by RamDoubler, which is plus to 8 meg system owners.

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Scaled 100%

Well engineered sprites. The graphics in Escape Velocity are really incredible. The spite graphics and movement are flawless. The sprites are sharp and detailed and most appear to be seamless. Shadows are accurate and add a great touch of realism to the game. Even more impressive are the 8-bit graphics that accompany each planet, station, or dock. Using KPT Bryce, Ambrosia was able to create stellar landscapes that look so very real. The docking stations could easily have been taken out of a Sci-Fi thriller, that's how good they are.

Plug-ins. Yes, EV is one of the few shareware games, if not the only game I've ever seen that allowed you to use plug-ins. In making a plug-in, the author can add weapons and ships, modify weapons and ships, add missions, and do many other things that you didn't even know were happening. For instance, you may think the ships you see are randomly chosen, and they are to an extent, but there is a resource that lets you choose exactly which ships will appear where, what probability they will have of appearing there, etc. Plug-ins also add to the replay value infinitely, because as long as there are more plug-ins, there are more missions to be done, ships to be purchased, and enemies to be killed.

Escape Velocity starts you out in a lowly Shuttlecraft - the cheapest ship money can buy, but it's good enough for now. In order to raise money, you must do one of the following: trade commodities, complete basic missions, run special errands for governments or companies, or pillage ships. If you want to become simply great, you'll have to carefully intertwine each of the following.

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[As a trader.](#) As a trader you buy commodities at low prices from systems and sell them for higher prices to other systems. This is a very slow, tedious, and dull way of making money. In general you'll never trade commodities.

[As a mission-goer.](#) Missions range from ferrying passengers to delivering materials to other systems. You'll make anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 credits for completing a mission. Rush deliveries - those with deadlines to be met - fetch the most money while transporting civilians is the cheapest mission around.

As a special mission-goer. These missions often involve endangering yourself, especially Confederate or Rebel missions. While Confed and Rebel missions usually end with a hefty pay or a special add-on, they are mostly reserved for larger more powerful ships, namely a Kestrel. Other special missions include helping Consolidated Express, a delivery company (pay ranges from 25,000 to 100,000) or working for United Galactic Express. The UGE missions are hard to come across since you must first help one of the employees. While UGE missions contain very strict deadlines, pay is very high, ranging from 90,000 to 150,000 credits. Other special missions can involve destroying pirates or the all-powerful alien.

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s a pillaging pirate. This has to be the easiest way to make money. You disable other ships, board them, and take credits, fuel, ammunition, cargo, or even try to take over the ship. However there's always a good chance of you tripping the self-destruct mechanism of the ship you're pillaging, which blows the ship up leaving you with nothing. While pillaging ships is very easy, especially with a powerful ship, you can end up annoying the local government and they'll deny you landing access, for a while.

The bottom line. There's too much to say about Escape Velocity to include in a review. EV has excellent graphics, sound, music, and is more addictive than any game I've ever seen. It is truly a commercial quality game (complete with all of the bugs <g>) for a great price - only \$20. If you're one of the few people who hasn't downloaded Escape Velocity (perhaps because of the lengthy download) you simply have to try it out, you won't regret it.

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raphics sound effects
music*

hallenge addictiveness
fun factor

oncept game play
story line

overall

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- there is only music in the the beginning, not during the game

Escape Velocity's System Requiriements:

- o 10 megabytes of hard drive space
- o 6 megabytes of IRAM minnimum, 8 megabytes recommended
- o monitor capable of displaying 256 colors at 640x480 (or greater resolution)
- o 68040 or 68LC040 processor or better

Download Time: ~110 minutes (14,400)

Want to find out more about EV Plug-Ins? Click on
the picture!

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