

**MULTIPLAYER
ANIMATED
ROLEPLAYING
SYSTEM**

AN INTRODUCTION

Design by Tonio Loewald
Programming by Andrew Barry

M A R S

Introduction

The Multiplayer Animated Roleplaying System (MARS) is a powerful software engine designed to speed and enhance the development and play of quality roleplaying computer games. MARS provides detailed scenery, quality adventures, and heart-pounding encounters for up to four players. MARS typically accompanies one or more specific roleplaying adventure games called Scenarios.

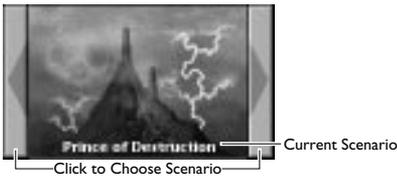
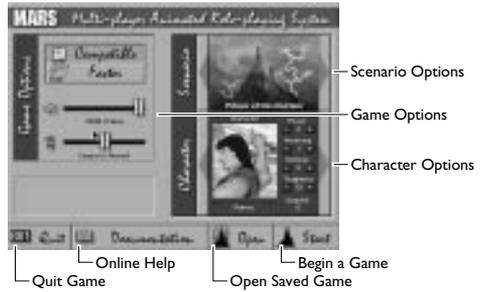
Installing the Software

To install MARS or any MARS scenario, refer to the “README” file that accompanies the software. It will provide complete installation instructions for installation on your computer.

Starting the Game

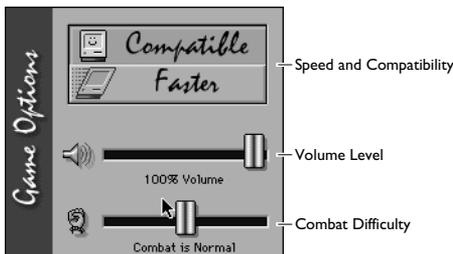
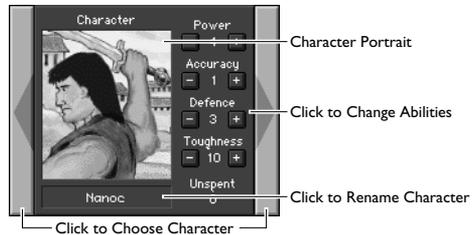
To run a scenario, double-click the MARS Master icon. After a brief pause, the Game Options screen will appear.

The Game Options screen provides several scenario, character and gameplay options. In addition, you may open a saved game, view online help information (if available), or quit the game.



In the upper right is the currently selected scenario. If available, you may select another scenario by clicking on the arrows to the right and left.

Select your character by clicking on the arrows to the left and right of the Character display. Name your character or change her abilities by clicking the appropriate boxes.

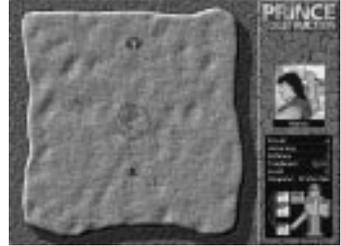


If you have a slower computer, select "Faster" mode to disable background programs and speed up game play. Click and drag the slider to change sound volume or combat difficulty.

When the game settings are customized to your satisfaction, click "Start" to begin the game.

What's Going On?

The action in MARS is viewed from a “bird’s eye” or top view. In the Prince of Destruction scenario, for example, you start by looking down at your character standing atop a tall monolith. The monolith has a pentagram at its center and an aged man standing near the top of the screen. Refer to the Scenario booklet for a brief walkthrough introduction to the game.



With a 640x480 or larger monitor, you may press the Help key at any time to show brief online help.

Controls & Movement

(We recommend playing POD two-handed — use your right hand to control movement and your left hand for combat or spellcasting.)

You can move your character by turning and walking. You can turn while walking — experiment. To run, hold down either shift key while moving forward.

Keys	Description	Notes
  	Turn left	Rotate anti-clockwise.
  	Forward	Character moves forward.
  	Turn right	Rotates clockwise.
	Run	Hold down — doubles speed.

Combat

Characters may also be able to attack, fire missiles, and defend. You cannot melee or fire missiles without an appropriate weapon, nor defend without a shield. Only characters with significant weapon training may defend.

Keys	Description	Notes
  	Attack	Perform a melee attack.
  	Shoot	Shoot/throw a missile.
  	Defend	Defend against melee attacks.

Non-Combat Actions

Key	Description	Notes
	Save	Save the current game.
	Open	Load a previously saved game.
	Search	Search the area.
	Talk	Open a Talk dialog.
	Use	Use an item in your inventory.
	Leave	Drop an item on the ground. (Use in a multiplayer game to give items to another player.)
	Quit	Quit the current game.

To pick up the belongings of a monster you have defeated, walk over the corpse. Search corpses that you come across in your travels.

Talking

Press the **[7]** key to speak with another character or monster. Talking to other people — including other players in a multiplayer game — opens a speech balloon; type what you want to say then press return/enter. Computer controlled characters look for keywords in your statements; they all understand *hello*, *name*, *job*, and *place*; they may also recognize words they've already used and words you've been told to use when speaking with them. Human controlled players are generally smarter. Most of the words a computer character recognizes appear in a highlighted color. For example:

Player: *hello*

Farmer: What do you want? I'm busy with these **aphids**.

Player: *aphids?*

Farmer: There are **aphids** all over me? Can't you see? Are you blind?

Player: *blind?*

Farmer: **APHIDS!** aiyeeeeeee!

Player: *name*

Farmer: Go away, or **help** me kill the **aphids**.

Player: *kill*

Farmer: **APHIDS!** aiyeeeeeee!

Player: *help*

Farmer: I...need...**HELP**...get...me...some...**GLUE!**

Player: *glue?*

Farmer: Give me **glue!**

Here, the phrase *APHIDS! aiyeeeee!* indicates that the computer character understands nothing. Note that punctuation such as “?” is ignored but can be included for aesthetic reasons. It is also possible that the character will recognize words that are not highlighted in color. E.g. the computer character in this case may understand the word “give”. If you have a 640x480 or larger display, the side-panel can provide a history of recent discussions.

Using Items

Press the  key to use an item. Use items to wear new armor or wield a different weapon, or to use special items. Using items of healing is a common practice.

Searching

Press the  key to search an area. Searching everywhere is pointless; only search where you have been told to or where there is something unusual.

Other Controls

Key	Description
	display brief online help
	rotate through various side panel displays
	scroll through thought and speech balloons
	volume control (0 is silent; 9 loudest)
 -SPACE	toggle full-screen (compatible mode only)
CAPS LOCK	pause game (single-player mode only)

Network Play

Multiplayer POD uses a client/server architecture. The MARS Master application operates as the server, while up to three copies of MARS Player (together with the Game Data folder) on other computers operate as clients. Each player must have a separate computer, and every computer must exist together on a network.

To play a network game, one player should launch the MARS Master application first. Up to three other players may then launch the MARS Player application to join the game. Saved multiplayer games require all players to rejoin the game when the game is continued. For best results, switch off File Sharing for multiplayer play (MacOS).

Technical Notes

MARS runs in real time and is nearly modeless. In “compatible” mode it even acts like a good citizen (giving background applications processing time, and so on). It uses on-the-fly resource and data compression so that despite having oodles of content, it doesn’t fill up your hard disk.

Under MacOS, MARS is fat binary, meaning it runs fast on both Macintosh and PowerMacintosh computers. It supports Sound Manager 3.0 and the Speech Manager. MARS was implemented using Metrowerks CodeWarrior Gold for both PowerPC and 680x0 versions. The content was created with tools created with THINK Pascal, MacApp 2.x, TCL, and HyperCard, as well as good old ResEdit.

Compatibility Notes

MARS uses internal resource and data compression. On the fly compression, such as AutoDoubler, Stuffit Spacesaver, AIC, and so forth, is not so much incompatible with MARS as pointless.

Virtual memory may cause MARS to grind to a halt if there is insufficient physical RAM for its needs. The standard practice of running PowerMacs with 1MB of virtual RAM should not trouble MARS (MacOS). RAMDoubler is fine, as long as you have enough physical RAM to run MARS.

MARS may be very jerky if many programs are left running in the background or if File Sharing is switched on. Fast mode does not guarantee background tasks any processing time, nor can MARS be switched to the background. In compatible mode you can reduce MARS to a window with command-space (MacOS) or ALT-space (Win), and then place it in the background by clicking outside of the window.

MARS is not currently compatible with Appletalk Remote Access.

Known Problems

Why isn't POD compatible with my favorite extensions?

Known conflicts are:

- Anything that puts MARS in the background — especially in fast mode — without paying for dinner and drinks first. e.g. Darkside of the Mac.
- Anything that switches screen depths (number of colors/greys) after MARS thinks it knows what the screen depth is.
- MARS may fail to update the screen properly after a screen saver such as After Dark has blanked the screen. In compatible mode or on a Power Mac you can force a redraw by pressing command-space (to toggle full screen mode). Screen savers that dim the screen palette are perfectly compatible.

Future Features

Will MARS ever run by modem?

Maybe. It depends on the amount of demand for this feature. It will also require a fast modem, but those are getting cheap.

Will MARS ever run across the internet?

Not until they add a few lanes to the “superhighway.”

Will MARS ever support more than 4 players?

Very likely.

Will MARS ever support more than 4 characters?

Extremely likely.

Is MARS restricted to fantasy?

MARS is not restricted to anything.

If I make a scenario, how different can it be from MARS?

Totally. Characters can look different, act different, change form, whatever.

Will MARS ever support gamemastered play? (i.e. one or more superusers who can modify the scenario on to fly and operate NPCs as puppets.)

Either it or a later product we release will.

How do I develop scenarios?

A scenario editor is being developed.

That's not a Bug, It's a Feature!

There's this bug where you can loot your own corpse. If I do it for long enough, I'll be rich!

Whatever turns you on. You lose a level every time you die; but you can never drop below level 0. This is not a bug.

Why can't I customize the controls?

We realize that many people like being able to configure their own controls, but there are a lot of different commands in MARS and being able to provide good online help for a fixed — and carefully chosen — set of commands seemed better than providing endless customization.

Updates

Updates to MARS and others MARS products can be obtained on our Internet File Server (FTP), common Macintosh and Windows FTP sites (such as info-mac), and major online services.

Feature Requests & Comments

We are interested in your ideas for additional features. If you do send us requests, please rate how important each request is to you.

Credits

Programming

Andrew Barry

Design

Tonio Loewald

Graphics & Animation

*Tonio Loewald
Pamina Loewald*

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MARS • Controls Quick Reference			
↵	Forward (5 8])	🔊	Sound Volume (0..9)
⏪	Left (4 7 [)	👁	Search
⏩	Right (6 9 \)	💬	Talk
⏮	Back (2 ')	👉	Use
🗡	Melee Attack (⌘)	👜	Inventory
🔫	Shoot/Cast (opt.)	📁	Open
🛡	Defend (ctrl)	📁	Save (P)
🌀	Select Spell (<>)	📄	Change Sidebar (←→)
🏃	Run (Shift)	⏮ ⏩	Scroll/Select (↑ ↓)
⏸	Pause (Caps Lock)	EXIT	Quit

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BadgerCom Software Inc.

1205 West Elizabeth E111

Fort Collins, Colorado 80521 USA

Telephone 970-482-5641

Fax 970-482-5655

Internet Email badger@badgercom.com

World Wide Web <http://www.badgercom.com>

Internet File Server <ftp://ftp.badgercom.com>

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