

Spaceward Ho! (cont.)

EXPLORING PLANETS: TEMPERATURE & GRAVITY

At some stage you'll want to leave your home planet and spend some effort exploring the nearby stars looking for other hospitable planets. Each planet has two important characteristics: Temperature and Gravity.

Temperature represents everything you can change about a star system, from the atmospheric content to the planetary ecology. Your home planet is 72 degrees. When you spend money on Terraforming a new planet, its temperature will get closer to 72'. When the temperature reaches 72', the planet is as good as it's going to get, and you can't spend more on Terraforming.

Gravity represents everything you can't change about a star system, from the output of the sun to the tidal forces of the moon. Some places just plain aren't as habitable as others. Your home planet is 1.00 G, and the closer a planet is to that, the better off the population will be. Planets much bigger than 2.5 G or smaller than 0.4 G will never make a profit and aren't worth colonizing for the long term. Of course, metal being the scarce commodity it is, you shouldn't balk at colonizing an inhospitable planet long enough to take all its metal.

How to Colonize Planets

At some point you'll find a juicy planet that you'd like to keep. It will be something like 1.46 G and 198'. It will have 9,487 Metal, and you just won't be able to resist.

The first step is to build a Colony Ship of some sort, and send it there. (If your skill level is "Novice," one colony ship will already be built for you.) When it arrives, you'll get a message letting you know that you've colonized a new planet. It'll say something like, "You've just colonized Sol."

You'll notice at this point that in your Budget Window a new slot has appeared with the name of the new star. This is where you allocate money to Terraforming and Mining for this planet.

It takes a while for a planet to become profitable, even if it's a great planet. For

decades, you'll pump money in, terraforming and mining the planet. You'll watch the population grow from a tiny handful into a booming, profitable economy that contributes to your Galactic Empire. The worse a planet is to start with, the longer it will take you to get it to make a profit.

The more money you spend on Terraforming a planet, the faster it will grow. Unfortunately, even when the temperature is a perfect 72', you probably still won't have enough people there to support the whole planet. Be patient, the population will grow. Mining and shipbuilding don't have any effect on how quickly the population grows.

It costs a base of \$7,500 to support a planet. Since your home planet only produces about \$30,000 per turn, you only have enough money to colonize four planets at a time. At most. You'll probably want to colonize only one, at least until it rounds the corner into profitability. Otherwise, you end up spending all your money just keeping your people alive, only leaving you with a little to improve the planets, build ships, and research new technology.

It's good to have lots of colonized planets. The more profitable planets you have, the more money you make. The more money you make, the more you can spend on research. The higher your technology, the less likely you are to be overrun by an enemy—assuming you have built ships with that higher technology. Also, if you have lots of planets you can afford to have one or two trampled by enemy ships.

You'll notice that all your colonies look like good guys. That is, they aren't wearing a mask, or dark sunglasses, or mohawks, or earrings. It's simple: You get to wear the white hat. Of course, all the other players think they're the good guys, too.

How to Strip-Mine a Planet

Sometimes you'll find yourself short of metal. Now is a good time to colonize a planet that you know darned well won't ever make a profit, no matter how much you terraform it and how long you wait. Maybe it's 3.5 G, or even worse. Colonize the planet, but adjust the planet's spending so that you spend no money on Terraforming. Spend it all on Mining. When you've taken as much metal as you want to from the planet, "Abandon" it. Any Satellites you've built there will stay, but your colonists will be evacuated.

Sometimes you may want to mine a planet just to keep an enemy from getting its metal.

How to Kill Enemy Planets

Send a fleet to an enemy colony. Once your fleet destroys the enemy ships and satellites, it will go on to pound on the planet itself, killing off the population in great droves. The planet itself may put up a fierce resistance, but this is likely to be only enough to defend against exploratory forces. Against your invasion fleet, odds are good that the planet's population will be completely wiped out. The enemy will no longer own the planet. You'll be free to colonize it, or do whatever else you want. Of course, the enemy may be annoyed, and attempt to recapture it, so caution is a good idea.

Different Planet Pictures

Different kinds of planets will each have a unique look. This section is a glossary of planet pictures.

A Colonized, Profitable Planet

This is a planet where your population has grown to the point where it can support itself. It can even supply money for your interstellar effort. Your home planet is like this.

A Potentially Profitable Planet

A planet in this category, given enough time and effort, could be profitable someday. To make it profitable, you'll have to terraform it until it's close to 72' and give the population time to grow.

A Semi-habitable Planet

A planet between 0.4 and 0.5 G, or between 2.0 and 2.5 G falls into this category. Eventually, this type of planet can be made profitable. Still, it's never going to be

very profitable, so often it's best to mine this kind of planet and leave it.

An Inhospitable Planet

Planet with gravity greater than 2.5 G or less than 0.4 G will be almost impossible to make profitable. Still, on rare occasions it can be a good idea to keep such a planet around for strategic reasons. The rest of the time, just mine all the Metal from it and "Abandon" it—don't bother to terraform it.

A Strip-Mined, Inhospitable Planet

This kind of planet not only won't ever turn a profit, it doesn't even have any metal you can mine. Yuck! Unless it has some strategic importance or you're afraid there's an enemy base there, just leave this junk alone.

An Unexplored Planet

This is a planet that you've never been to.

A Soon-to-be-explored Planet

If you send a fleet to an unexplored planet, the question mark will turn into an exclamation point, letting you know that you'll know more soon. If you have "Show Fleet Paths" on in the "Preferences..." dialog, you'll see a dotted line for the fleet aimed at this planet.

An Enemy Planet

Any planet where you lose a battle becomes an enemy planet. A planet will stay an enemy until you send another fleet there and win a battle. In fact, you might send a fleet to an enemy planet and find no one, or a different enemy, there. All the information you have about planets is based on the last time you were there. If it's been a long time since you were at a given planet, your information about that planet may be out of date.

Enemy planets look like a variety of bad guys. Each enemy player will have his own look, so you can tell who you're fighting where.

An Ally Planet

When you ally with another player, his icon on the Star Map will change to reflect this. His icon will become a fighter color, and he'll get a "halo" over his head, since he's a good guy, now.

A Battle Planet

Occasionally, you'll send a fleet to a star you've never been to and find an enemy fleet similar in strength to yours. If you and the enemy are both killed, you'll get this planet picture. It says you haven't explored the planet yet, but you know bad guys are near. You'll also see this planet if you notice a large battle from two other players fighting at a planet you haven't yet explored

Satellites

If you put satellites up at any planet, that planet will have a circle around it in the star map to let you know that it's defended.

Fleets

If you have a fleet at any planet, a small picture of a fleet will show up on the upper right hand corner of the planet to let you know. We know, it looks like a moon, but don't let that fool you.

Allied Fleets

If you see friendly fleets parked at one of your planets, they'll have a fleet symbol on the upper left of the planet (instead of the upper right, where your fleet symbol goes).

ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY

Researching new technologies is easy. You just spend money on Tech in the Player

Window, and away you go. You can weight your research into certain areas by balancing your Technology budget in the Tech Spending Window, available from the "Windows" menu.

Range

Range is how far a fleet can move before refueling. If a ship has a range of 8, it can go 4 spaces and come back to refuel, or it can go 8 spaces and be stranded when it gets there. When a ship's Range is 12, it can go 6 spaces and come back safely, or make a one way trip of up to 12 spaces. That's a long way, and it will let you make deep raids into enemy territory or explore planets on the fringes of the Galaxy.

Speed

Speed is how fast a ship goes. If a ship has speed 1, it will take it five turns to move five spaces. If its speed is 3, it will make the same trip in only two turns. Speed can be important for reacting quickly to an enemy attack, or surprising him with one of your own. A high speed technology also can allow you to explore new systems much faster than you would otherwise be able. Perhaps most importantly, in battle, the ships with the highest speed shoot first.

Weapons and Shields

Weapon and Shield technologies determine how well a ship fights. The amount of damage you do is based upon the difference between your Weapon Tech and the defender's Shield Tech. If your Weapon Tech is higher than the enemy's Shield Tech, you'll do a lot of damage each turn to his ship. If your Weapon Tech is less than the enemy's Shield Tech, you'll do little or no damage each turn.

For example, let's say your ship has Weapon Tech 5. If you attack somebody who has Shield Tech 1, his shields will be ineffective against your weapons, and you'll decimate him. If the defender has Shield Tech 5, you'll damage his ship somewhat, but his shield will block the rest. If he has Shield Tech 8, your attack will be almost 100% blocked, and he'll laugh at your attack.

Generally, to fight evenly against an enemy with high weapon and shield techs, you need twice as many ships for each level you are behind. For example, if you

have Weapon and Shield Tech 5 and the enemy has Weapon and Shield Tech 7, you want four times as many ships for an even battle. In fact, you probably want more like 10; who wants an even battle?

Mini

Mini (Miniaturization) allows you to build ships for less metal but more money. Since metal can be a lot scarcer than money, building ships with high Mini Techs may be a good idea. Colonists can't be miniaturized, so Mini has little effect on Colony Ships.

Radical

Radical research can give you things that none of the other technologies can. When you put money into Radical Tech, once in a while your scientists may make an amazing discovery. Some Radical discoveries might give you higher tech levels, biological weapons, weather control, mind control, cloaking, or new mining techniques. Whatever.

You never know when the next Radical Tech leap will happen—it's far more random than the other technologies. We're not going to describe all the possible things that can happen with Radical Tech—you'll have to discover that for yourself.

Radical Tech increases to the other technologies don't change your baseline of research for those technologies. For example, if your Weapon and Shield Tech levels are 5 and 5, and your Radical Tech causes your Shields to go to 7, your Weapon will reach 8 at the same time that Shield Tech does. This means that the Radical Tech advantage is only temporary, so use it well.

Choosing Technologies

The technologies you choose to develop are totally up to you, and will depend on your goals for that game.

If you develop a high Range Tech, you can reach many planets on the fringes of the galaxy that nobody else can reach. You can develop these without having to worry about defending them.

Good weapons and shields are essential if you're involved in combat, but remember, the technology alone isn't enough. Having the capability of building high Weapon Tech spaceships means nothing in combat; having lots of high Weapon Tech spaceships does.

Miniaturization becomes more important as the game goes on. In the early game, there is plenty of metal in the galaxy, and it's easy to come by. Late in the game, it might be the limiting factor of your fleets' sizes, and a high Mini will serve you well.

Speed has advantages that aren't immediately apparent. A fast counterstrike fleet can often catch and destroy an attacking enemy force after it has captured one of your planets. Usually the attacker has to fly in a Colony Ship, colonize your ex-planet, and support it for a turn just so he can refuel. If you have fast ships, you can catch him there. If you have slow ships, he'll get away unscathed.

Radical Tech is a gamble. If you happen to get lucky, and make useful discoveries quickly, it can turn your game around. On the other hand, sometimes you'll get nothing out of it for eons.

SENDING MESSAGES

You can send messages to the other players in a game of Spaceward Ho!. Since the computer players have to understand and send messages of their own, we've come up with a simple language for everyone in the game.

To send a message, just choose "Send Message..." from the "Galaxy" menu. A dialog will come up which will let you decide who to send to, what to say, and things like that. The best way to learn all the messages is to try them all.

The messages will have varying effect on the person receiving them. If you tell a player you hate him, he will tend to like you less than he did before. If you say you like him, he may or may not like you, too.

The computer players will lie with their messages occasionally, some more than others. They can't lie about some message, though, just like you can't.

ALLIANCES

You can ally with the other players, whether they're human or computer players. In short, when you form an alliance, you'll no longer fight that player. When you encounter allies' ships or planets, you'll just coexist peacefully. You can refuel at allied planets, too.

Of course, to form an alliance, both players have to want it. You show your opinion of the other players with the "Alliances..." dialog in the "Galaxy" menu. This is also where you see their opinion of you.

All the game really does for allies is make sure they don't kill each other. Presumably, you'll want to share information with your allies. You might also give them money and metal when they need it most. (Do this with the "Give Money/Metal..." dialog.)

You can break an alliance by moving the alien in question from the "Like" column to the "Don't Like" column in the "Alliances..." dialog. You'll now fight to the death everywhere you coexisted with him. Coincidentally, you'll also earn his permanent hatred and distrust.

REVIEWING BATTLES

Sometimes your ships bump into other players' ships. When this happens, they fight until one side is dead. Admittedly, this doesn't make for easy peaceful coexistence, but this is a war game. Anyway, when you have a fight, you'll want to know what the heck happened. There are a couple of ways to find out. First, if you have "Review Battles" checked in the "Preferences..." dialog, you'll get a summary of battles at the beginning of each turn.

You also can select any star and review the last battle at that star by selecting "Review Battle at Proxima" (or whatever) from the "Galaxy" menu. If there have been two or more battles at a star, you can only see the most recent one this way.

Double-check on a star to review the most recent battle there.

Click on a battle summary message in the Report Window to review that battle. If there's been more than one battle at a star, you can review an old battle this way.

You can set how fast SpacewardHo! plays the battle in the "Preferences..." dialog.

If you lose a battle in the first round, your ship commanders don't have enough time to send you any information about the battle before they're destroyed. Thus you'll have little idea how many enemy ships are there – just that there are enough annihilate you.

COMPARING PLAYERS

If you ever get the urge to see how you're doing compared to the other players in the game, select, "Compare Players..." from the "Galaxy" menu. You will get to see how some of your attributes (like Weapon Tech or Income) compare to others.

"Ship Power" is how big and tough your fleets are. It's the sum of all the tech levels of all your ships. It can give you an indication of how powerful your fleets are.

The number of players in the game will not include anyone who is dead.

Click on the "Show Skills..." button to show what each player's skill level is: novice, beginner, normal, expert, or advanced. Computer players will list a skill randomly chosen from among the various players' skills, to help try to hide who the computer players are. The actual computer intelligence is at the bottom of this window.

The History Graph

This shows a 1,000 year history of your progress. You can turn on and off the various bars with the icons at the bottom of the graph. The technology graphs show your position relative to the other players, just like the "Compare Players..." dialog. The other three are "absolute" indicators—the more money you make, the higher you go on the graph, regardless of how well the other players are doing.

CUSTOM GALAXIES

When you first start a Spaceward Ho! game you'll have a lot of options about how

you want the galaxy to look. You can decide how many computer players to play against, how good they'll be, how big the galaxy is, and things like that. We'll cover the options here.

The "Number of Computer Players" is pretty obvious: It's the number of enemies that will occupy the galaxy with you. The more there are, the more resistance you'll find. (When playing on Outland, real players jump in and take over for computer players.)

The "Galaxy Size" determines how big the galaxy is. The bigger the galaxy, the more room there is for each player to roam. In a small galaxy with many players, the game will tend to be heated and fast. In a large galaxy with only a few players, the game will develop for a long time before there's any combat. Games in humongous galaxies will take forever.

The "Galaxy Style" is what general shape the galaxy will have. Ring galaxies tend to have the most even starts, with each player strewn around the ring. Cluster and Spiral galaxies start players off fairly evenly. A Random galaxy has stars to tossed down higgledy-piggledy. Any player might start in an extremely good or bad position—right on top of several enemies, or with nobody in any nearby stars.

The "Computer Intelligence" determines how hard a game the computer players will give you. Smarter players will learn from their mistakes, will build larger fleets, will invest more heavily in Technology, and will expand faster. The smart players also start out with all the advantages that a "Novice" human player has—lots of metal, several ships to start with, and a planet population. Dumb players, besides being stupid, have to start out at the human "Expert" setting, which gives them no starting metal, no ships, and a low planet population.

At first, even the Dumb computer players will prove to be difficult opponents, but as your skill grows you'll find them unchallenging. Eventually, you may be good enough to defeat Smart players consistently, even with yourself on Expert. This puts you in the ranks of the very best Ho! players. Try playing against Joe and Peter.

THE COMPUTER PLAYERS

When you play Spaceward Ho! you can play against lots of people, lots of

computers, or some mixture. We recommend putting a couple of computer players in each game just to keep everyone guessing. It's intentionally difficult to tell exactly who is a computer and who is a human. The computer players will each adopt a unique strategy, just as each person will. Some will be happy to sit on their home planets, building satellites and researching new technologies. Some will be aggressive, trying to expand rapidly. Some will go for a high weapon and shield technology, and then come out after the rest of the Galaxy. All will do their best to avoid defeat.

The more intelligent computer players will adapt to your actions during a game, and will adapt their strategy to current situations. They think on a more long-term scale than the less intelligent computer players, and will generally explore the galaxy faster and more efficiently. They will accumulate larger fleets, and will be more difficult to defeat in a major battle. They will increase their Tech spending if they feel they are falling behind in the arms race.

You'll notice as you play that the computer players learn a bit about how you play. They'll start naming their ships the same way you name yours, and they'll even start naming themselves after friends who've come over for a multi-player game.

THE OPTIONS MENU

Below is a summary of the options available in the "Options ..." menu.

Auto Play

Auto Play has the computer do your turn automatically.

If you have the computer play for you, the computer will develop its own strategy, just like regular computer opponents. This is a good way for novices to learn. It's also very convenient when you're either about to win (or lose) but don't want to finish the game yourself. Select this option, too, when you have to leave a multi-player game early but don't want your territory fall completely apart.

Having the computer play for you still leaves you some control. The computer will never change your tech spending bars. If you build ships, the computer will use them. If you send ships somewhere, the computer won't redirect them until they reach their destination. The computer will generally try to keep the colonies you have, unless it believes it's spread too thin.

If you select "just mark my turn done," that's all that will happen. None of your budget bars will ever change (except when you lose or gain planets). This is a convenient option when you have several turns in a row where nothing interesting is happening, like when you're waiting for a colony to become profitable.

Select "I'll play my own turns" to turn off Auto Play.

The scroll bar at the bottom of the Auto Play dialog determines how long each message is displayed. Normally, you have to click each message to make it go away. Under Auto Play, you can still click, but if the time runs out, it will go away automatically. This is only important when you're watching the computer on Auto Play.

You can set the style of the computer play when you put it into Auto Play. The scroll bars in the Auto Play dialog set how much your computer will prefer to attack and defend. Play with the controls—you'll figure them out.

PREFERENCES

The first time you run SpacewardHo!, a preferences file called "SpacewardHo! Prefs" will be created.

We store everything in the prefs file: where you like the windows placed, whether you want sound on or off, your preferred battle speed, and so on. To start fresh, just throw away the preferences file. All this information will be erased.

Most of the Preferences are set by the "Preferences..." dialog in the "Options" menu.

Show Fleet Paths

This option will make Spaceward Ho! show a dotted line when your fleets are on their way somewhere. As the fleets get closer, the line will get shorter. It's convenient and informative.

Automatically Sort Planet List

This will sort your planets by income every turn. This means that your best planets will always be on the bottom of the list (since presumably you don't need to play with them) and your brand new planets will be right up there at the top. This means you don't have to search through the list for the relevant planets. You can turn this option off and just drag around the planets to put them in the order you want, just like you used to, if you want. We don't recommend it, though.

Show Event Messages

If this item is selected, all event-messages will be displayed in the lower left hand corner of the map at the beginning of each turn. Click on the message or press return to go to the next one.

All messages appear in the Report Window whether or not this item is checked.

Review Announced Battles

This item only matters if the one above it, "Show Event Messages," is also checked. If both of them are, then every time a battle event message is about to be displayed, the battle will automatically be reviewed. If it is not checked, only the summary message will be shown.

Set Battle Speed

You can control the speed of shots and explosions in the battle reviews by setting the battle speed here. If you get bored watching battles, speed them up. Having "Piles Shoot Together" will speed up battles considerably, especially with giant battles. Deselecting "Fully Animated Battles" will skip the explosion graphics, making battles go even faster.

SHORTCUTS

We've provided a couple of shortcuts for various things in Spaceward Ho!. This section will let you know about them, and give examples for some.

If you click on any event in the Report Window, your map will automatically scroll

to where the event took place.

You can change the scale of the Star Map to give yourself a better view of the whole galaxy, or to look closely at some specific section of it. To do this, just choose "Zoom in" or "Zoom out" from the "Galaxy" menu. Their command keys are Command-minus and Command-plus, respectively. A lot of detail is lost when you zoom out all the way.

Generally, you'll want to zoom out to get an idea of where you live, and then zoom in so you can tell what's going on. As the game progresses, you'll probably find that your neighborhood doesn't fit in your Star Map any more, so you'll want to use the middle magnifications.

You can click on the name of a star in the Budget Window to scroll the Star Map to that star and select it. When you select a star in the Star Map, the Star fist will scroll to the current star and select it there.

If you save a lot of money, you might find it hard to spend just a little bit of money on one star. To get more precision on the low end of the budget spending bars, click on the word "Linear" at the top of the budget bar chart. It will convert to a "Log" scale. The Tech Spending bars are always in a log scale.

When you colonize lots of stars, you'll notice that the number of planets in your budget bars gets too big to fit on the screen. You'll end up having to scroll around to see all your planets. Rather than do this, you can actually move the planets you care about to the same place in the list. Click on a planet's name in the budget fist and drag it around to where you want it to be. It's a good idea to drag your Savings and Tech bars to near the top of the fist so you can always see them.

You can rapidly select and scroll to a lost fleet by selecting the fleet in the "List All Fleets..." dialog and choosing "Go to Fleet."

To find a star of interest, you can "List All Explored Stars..." and hit the "Go to Star" button (if it's an explored star). Or just start typing the star's name on the keyboard.

When you're moving ships, you can choose the next ship in the planet's list by hitting the Tab key.

You can go to the next event message by hitting the return key.

THE END

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