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Introduction

Stellar Empires for Windows is a fast paced strategic game of galactic conquest. A player begins an empire with a single star. Stars are added to an empire through colonization of uncolonized stars and annexation of stars held by other empires. The game is complete when there is only one empire left. The game is designed such that the more you play, the more features you learn, and the more challenging the game becomes.

Your species has evolved on a planet revolving around just one of the many stars in the galaxy. You have achieved space flight, spread throughout your system, but are still confined to your home star because you have not discovered a way to move faster than the speed of light. Yet you yearn for the stars.

Then the Traders, an alien species, visits your star. These aliens are passing through your section of the galaxy and trade you one piece of knowledge for your entire technical and historical data base, supplies and art objects.

This one piece of knowledge was not a faster than light drive, it was a gravimetric drive which is a way to move from one star to another where the gravitational forces have weakened the fabric of space. The only drawback is that you can only move between stars where these weak space fabrics (star links) exist. The golden age is here and you begin spreading out among the stars.

However as you spread out from your home star you discover that you are not the only species in this region of the galaxy to have received a visit from the Traders. It begins to look as if the Traders cut the same deal with every advanced species in this neck of the woods. It is now a race for the best stars, the competition for real estate is fierce. Disputes occur, skirmishes, battles and then war. Your species realizes that the only way to guaranty that your species will survive and prosper without interference, is to conquer the other species before they conquer you. Thus are Stellar Empires born!

Related Topics:

[Features](#)

[Author's Note](#)

Features

Randomly generated star map allows virtually an endless supply of different scenarios.

Number of stars in a game may vary from 50 to 1500 for short, medium or long games.

Number of players may vary from 2 to 12 with any combination of computer or human players.

Totally mouse controllable, play a game and never touch the keyboard.

Options to vary the difficulty and complexity of the game.

Replay a game, as the same player or as another player.

Author's Note

Stellar Empires started one day when I was playing a computer game with a friend and we were talking about the computer players and how "dumb" they were. I bragged that if I had written the program the computer players would not be so dumb. My friend, ever ready to help out, suggested that I put my money where my mouth was.

This encouragement combined with the acquisition of a C++ compiler and the need to write something short to get a feel for programming in Windows with C++, resulted in the start of Stellar Empires.

Fifteen months later, something that started as a minor project and which turned into a major passion is being released. Tahuya Bay Software and Stellar Empires are born.

Are the computer players "smarter" than the ones in that game of long ago? I think so, but I'm biased and play the higher levels of difficulty. I know how the game works, but it still challenges me and is the game I play most often (even outside of testing). Several Beta testers called it addictive. I hope so. So if you find the game enjoyable please support your game programmer ("me") and register.

What is up and coming for Stellar Empires:

- Supply lines and maintenance for ships.
- Sound.
- Better ways to get your ships where you need them.
- Alliances: human-computer and computer-computer.
- Special Events (Mutinies, Novas, Defections ...).
- Selection of Home Star.
- Worm Holes.

Where is Tahuya Bay Software going in the Future? Hopefully you will be seeing not only improvements to Stellar Empires but the addition of more entertainment software. I have found I have a real passion for writing games. Current ideas on the table are an arcade style game, educational software, a fantasy role playing game and a couple of spin-offs from Stellar Empires.

Thanks for at least trying Stellar Empires and I hope you like it at least half as much as I do.

What You Should Know

Registration

Distribution License

Technical Assistance

Registration

Stellar Empires is SHAREWARE. Registration information and a registration form can be found by clicking the Stellar Empires button located in the upper left corner of the [star map](#) and then clicking the Registration Button.

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- Call **TSCNET** Bulletin Board System (BBS) via modem at (206) 692-2388, 2400-14400 bps, or (206) 613-0536, 1200-14400 bps. TSCNET is one of the most popular Public Bulletin Boards in the Pacific Northwest. Log on to the BBS and enter: **J TAHUYA BAY<cr>** to join the Tahuya Bay Conference. This conference contains our latest releases and updates. This is also a forum for your questions and comments about Stellar Empires and Tahuya Bay Software products. We usually check the conference every morning and try to respond to any questions within 48 hours. If you have problems with the BBS contact the system operator.
- Call a BBS which has RelayNet International Message Exchange (RIME) Network and send a message to RIME node 1607, addressed to Brian Schuettke. Contact your local sysop if you need help sending a RIME Network message.
- Write to us at the following address:
Tahuya Bay Software
PO Box 838
Silverdale, WA 98383-0838
- Call us Monday thru Friday between 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm Pacific Time at (206) 692-0371.

Tutorial

This tutorial was designed to give you a feel for how Stellar Empires is played. The tutorial will be easier to use if you make a hardcopy on your printer. Select File from the help menu, then select Print Topic from the file menu.




To start a game, double click the Stellar Empires Icon . The game's background and control buttons are displayed along with the Introduction Box, which performs animation of a small game. To bypass the Introduction Box click the left mouse button while the mouse is anywhere in the Introduction Box. The About Box is then displayed (non-registered version only) showing the copyright and shareware notices. When viewing the About Box is done, click the OK Button

 to exit.

To load the tutorial game, click the File Control Button  which brings up the File Buttons. Click the Open Button



which selects a saved game. Click on tutorial.se to highlight the tutorial game, then click  to select the tutorial game. A pause occurs while the game is loaded. The star map is then shown in the window and the Caption Bar, at the top of the window, displays Tutorial :: Round 11 which indicates the current player (Tutorial) and the current round (11). The star map shows that Tutorial's stars (Cyan in color) are engaged with Player 6 (Magenta) on the right and are close to engaging Player 4 (Red) on the left. Uncolonized stars (Black) are below Tutorial's stars.

The star map is currently zoomed in. When zoomed in, you can see the Star ID Field for Tutorial's Home Star which contains the star number 27 (hexadecimal) and your ship count which is 5 (decimal). By clicking the right mouse button anywhere on the star map the game will zoom out to the full star map. Zoom out now using the right mouse button.

When the full star map is displayed you can see that Tutorial is sandwiched between Red and Magenta. Red is also engaged with Player 7 (Yellow), Yellow with Player 5 (Green) and Magenta with Player 2 (Gray).

You can view any portion of the star map by positioning the mouse cursor on the desired area and double clicking the left mouse button. This will cause the game to zoom in and center the map on that spot. Double clicking while already zoomed in causes the game to center on the new spot selected.

Spend some time looking over the star map by zooming in (left button double click), moving while zoomed in (left button double click), and zooming out (right button click).

Tutorial has three initial goals: to keep Magenta from encroaching on its empire; to colonize the stars below; and to take the stars away from Red so that Tutorial can obtain the uncolonized star cluster to the left.


Let's start playing! Click on the Home Star Button  to zoom in and center on Tutorial's Home Star.


Round 11:

Let's select star 20 which is obscured by star 22. The mouse does not need to be directly positioned on a star to select it, just close to it. To select star 20 position the mouse cursor so that it is closer to star 20 than it is to star 22 (a little to the left or above star 22 should do it), then click the left mouse button. Selecting a star displays the Star Control Dialog Box. You can see that the game is sending 1 ship to colonize star 29. The game automatically sends ships to stars based on Player Traits, and settings in the Star Control Dialog Box.

Since we're using the Visible Stars and Links option we know where Red is but Red does not know where Tutorial is and won't until contact is made! Tutorial can amass ships at star 20 while Red diverts ships to attack Yellow. This allows Tutorial to sweep through Red in this star cluster on a later turn before Red


can send reinforcements.


To build strength at star 20 before moving into star 29, we will set a Priority to this star, by setting the Priority Distance to 4. This is done by clicking on the down arrow of the spin control box  until the Priority box contains 4, and then clicking the Priority Button


. A confirmation box for directing ships to this star is displayed. Click the Yes Button


. All stars within 4 star links will have their Fleet Route set to send all ships to star 20. Star 20 now shows NONE for a Fleet Route. Click


 to exit the Star Control Dialog Box with the changes you made.

To verify the Priority, select star 27. Notice that the Fleet Route is set to star 25 and ships are being sent to star 25. Click .

Next we will set the border with Magenta. Select star 98 and set a Priority with a distance of 3. Click  to exit the Star Control Dialog Box.


We also want to colonize the stars below Tutorial because stars produce ships and ships take stars. To get some ships moving in that direction, select star 94 and tab to fleet field 9d using the tab button . Click the All Button

 to send all available ships to the selected star (9d). Click


 to exit the Star Control Dialog Box.

Click the Go Button  to end your turn.


Round 12:

We want to continue colonizing stars below Tutorial. Select star 9d and clear the ships going to star 94 by using the Tab Button  to get to the fleet field and then clicking the Clear Button

. Tab to the next fleet field for star 95 and click the Rest of Ships Button


. All ships except the 1 going to star 93 will go to star 95. Click

.


We can speed up the colonization of stars below Tutorial because the border with Magenta is stable (Tutorial has more ships than Magenta). Select star 94 ,

,

 to fleet field 9d,

 to send all ships to star 9d. Click


.


Last, we can send ships from star 20 to star 22 to also aid colonization. Select star 20, set the number of ships going to star 22 to 2 by clicking on the increment button  twice (note that the cursor was positioned at fleet field 22 already so there was no need to move the cursor). Click


.


Click .


Round 13:

We will continue the colonization effort by ensuring ships are routed to the stars below Tutorial. Perform the following steps: select star 95, use the decrement button  to set the number of ships colonizing star 9c to 1, use the back tab button


 to tab to fleet field 66, and click the numeric button

 2 to send 2 ships to star 66. To ensure that a steady flow of ships will move in the direction of star 66 we will set the Fleet Route to 66. Click the drop down arrow for the Fleet Route Selection Box

, click the down arrow on the scroll bar until 66 appears in the drop down list box, click on 66, and click

. This setting will remain until the Fleet Route is changed by the player, set by a Priority, or reset to ANY by the Clear Links Button




We also want to route the ships from star 9d into the colonization effort. Select star 9d and send all ships to star 95 by performing the following: ,




, and



Next, select star 9e. Note that this star is colonizing star 90 even though the Fleet Route is set to 94.

This will happen when the Colony Pattern Trait is set to 6 or 7. Click the Cancel Button  to exit the Star Control Dialog Box with the original settings.

The last colonization step is to obtain star 96 which is below star 92. We know star 9e will colonize star 90 and we want to ensure that star 96 is also colonized. Select star 92 and colonize star 96 instead of star 90 by clearing all fleet fields with the Clear All Button , and then performing the following:



, and



Click .

Round 14:


This round we want to continue to set Fleet Routes for the colonization effort.

Select star 24, set Fleet Route to 66, and click .

Select star 66, set Fleet Route to 62, and click .


Click .

Round 15:

This round we will divert the ships being sent from star 22 to star 20. Select star 22, set Fleet Route to 24, and click .

Click .


Round 16:

We now begin the assault on Red. Select star 20, set the Fleet Route to 29,  to the fleet field for star 29, enter 2 9 using the numeric buttons, click on the backspace button



to delete the 9, and enter 8 instead. The number of ships at this star is 29. However one ship must always remain at a star for a Garrison so only 28 ships can be sent to star 29. Click



We still want to continue setting Fleet Routes for colonization. Select star 62, set Fleet Route to 65, and click .



Click .

Round 17:

This round we will continue colonization, strengthen our border with Magenta, and continue the attack on Red.


Select star 65, set Fleet Route to 63, and click .

Select star 27, set Fleet Route to 97, and click .

Select star 29. The game has automatically decided to attack star 2a so click  or  to accept the game decision.

Click .

Combat for star 2a:

The Combat Dialog Box will be displayed during this turn. You will see the number of ships left in each force and the number of ships lost in the preceding battle. Click the Do or Die Button  to continue combat until you obtain the star or lose all your ships.

Round 18:

We want to continue the assault against Red. Select star 2a, send ships to attack star 3 by clicking ,

,


, and


. Select star 29 and send ships to star 21 by clicking

,

,


. Set the Fleet Route to 2a and click

. We want to send all ships to star 21 so there will be enough ships to attack star 23 in the next round. Any other ships after this round will go to star 2a.

To continue colonization: select star 63, set Fleet Route to 60, and click . Now we have enough ships to colonize the lower star cluster. However once the colonization is accomplished, we want Tutorial to be in a position to launch a campaign against Yellow so we will leave the Fleet Routes as they are.


Click .

Combat for star 3:

When combat starts for star 3, click the Continue Button  to indicate you want to see another battle. Click

 again for another battle. Red retreats after the second battle and the star is yours.

Round 19:

Select star 3 (obscured by star c2) and send ships to attack star c2 by clicking ,

,

,


, and

.


Select star 21. The game is already sending ships to attack star 23 so click .

Click .


Combat for star 23:



When the combat starts for star 23, click  to continue combat until you obtain the star or lose all your ships.

Round 20:

Select star c2, click ,

,

 to change the number of ships going to star c1 from 1 to 4. These ships will be used to colonize the rest of this cluster. Tab down to the fleet field for star 3 and click

 This will send the remaining ships to star 3 to defend it from Red. Click .

Click .

Combat for star 3:


When the Combat Dialog Box is shown, click .

Round 21:

Select star 25 (obscured by star 28) and set the Fleet Route to star 27. This will increase the number of stars sending ships to Magenta's border. Click .


Click .

Round 22:

We want to continue the movement of ships towards what will soon be Tutorial's border with Yellow. Select star 60 and set the Fleet Route to 63. Click .

Click .

Round 23:


Select star 3. We can see that the game is sending ships to attack star 2 so we will let this decision stand. Click .

Click .


Combat for star 2:

When the Combat Dialog Box is shown, click . Red will choose to retreat so Tutorial has annexed another star.

Combat for star 98:



Magenta has attacked Tutorial's fleet at star 98. When combat starts, click  repeatedly until we obtain the star. Watch the combat closely because the fleets are well matched and it might be necessary to retreat if the combat goes against Tutorial.

Round 24:

Select star b3, set the Fleet Route to b0, and click . This will keep the ships moving towards Yellow's border and eventual confrontation.

Click .


Round 25:

Select star 60, click , and then set the Fleet Route to star b3. Click . This is to correct for a mistake made in round 22. Ships have been sent back and forth between star 60 and star 63 because the Fleet Route on star 60 was set to star 63, and the Fleet Route on star 63 was set to star 60. Be careful with Fleet Route settings because the game can not correct them until the Clear Links Button is clicked, a Priority is set, or you change the route manually. We left the ships at star 60 so the ships at star 63 can join them before moving to confront Yellow.

Click .

Combat for star 4:

We did not check star 2 and the game decided to attack Red at star 4. We could have avoided this situation by setting star 2's Fleet Route to NONE or clearing star 2's fleet fields. Since we did not do

either click the Retreat Button  to pull your ships out of combat. We do not want Tutorial to capture star 4 yet because we would rather attack star 4 with more ships.

Let's zoom out and take a look at where we are at this time. We have accomplished our initial goals. Our new goal is to hold off Magenta while we conquer Yellow and Red.

This should give you an idea of the basic movements needed to play Stellar Empires. You now know enough to play. All other settings, buttons, and edit fields are there to enhance your enjoyment of the game and can be learned as you play (refer to the manual or on-line help for details). The more you play, the more features you become familiar with, and the more you understand the game's play method. This will create more enjoyment and challenge. Now go forth into the galaxy and build your Stellar Empire!

Basics

Stellar Empires consists of rounds. Each round has four phases: Player Order determination, Ship Production, Movement, and Movement Resolution.

Related Topics:

[Player Order](#)

[Ship Production](#)

[Movement](#)

[Movement Resolution](#)

[Winning Stellar Empires](#)

Player Order

The game randomly generates the order of play for each round. This order is followed in the other three phases.

Ship Production

The game determines the number of ships built at a star each round and adds them to the fleet currently at a star. Ship Production is based on a star's Resource Points and Linkage Points. Resource Points and Linkage Points accumulate each round. When this accumulation exceeds the Initialization Dialog Box, a ship is produced at that star.

Movement

Each player takes a turn in the order already determined by the game. On a player's turn, the game makes movement decisions for ships at a star based upon the player's traits, and settings in the Star Control Dialog Box. A human player may examine, modify and override movement decisions using the Star Control Dialog Box. A human player indicates their turn is complete by clicking the Go Button.

Movement Resolution

After all players have finished their Movement phase, the game moves the fleets to the designated stars. When more than one player has a fleet at a star, combat for that star occurs. Combat will continue at a star until only one player's fleet remains (whether by destruction or retreat). When only one player has ships at a star, the player's empire acquires/maintains control of the star.

Winning Stellar Empires

The game is won when there is only one empire. The player who controls that empire is the winner. However, much enjoyment and satisfaction may be derived from a losing campaign, especially one that influences the outcome of the game.

Starting or Restarting a Game

Click on the New Game Button to start a new game or the Restart Game Button to restart the current game. The Initialization Dialog Box will be displayed. Change the desired fields in the dialog box and click the OK Button. There will be a delay during generation of the star map. Once completed, the Options Dialog Box is displayed. Change any fields in the dialog box and click OK or Cancel. The visible part of the new star map is then shown on the screen.

Related Topics:

[Initialization Dialog Box](#)

[Options Dialog Box](#)

Initialization Dialog Box

This dialog box appears at the beginning of each new game or when restarting a game. It contains fields for setting options used to generate the star map. The player must select OK to start or restart a game.



Seed is the value used to randomly generate the layout of the star map. A different seed will produce a different star map. Clicking the New Game Button causes the computation of a new Seed value. Clicking the Restart Game Button uses the current game's Seed value, thus allowing the regeneration of the game.

Star Count is the approximate number of stars in the star map. A value between 50 and 1500 is valid for the Star Count.

Players field allows 2 to 12 human and computer players.

Difficulty sets the level of ability for computer players. The lower the value, the easier a computer player should be to beat.

Generate Extra Stars adds stars that do not have star links and which can never be reached by a player. If used, it increases the game's complexity.

Wild Links allows star links where one would not expect them and takes out links where one would expect them. This option adds a little spice for those who want a change from the normal linkage between stars and can increase complexity.

Home Star Resource Points is the number of Resource Points the Home Star will produce in a round.

Resource Range is the maximum number of Resource Points that a star can have. A star's Resource Point value is randomly set from 1 to Resource Range when the star map is generated, except for a Home Star which is set to the Home Star Resource Point value (see Ship Production).

Ship Resource Factor is the number of Resource Points and Linkage Points needed to produce a ship (see Ship Production).

Star Resource Factor is a multiplier used to calculate the Resource Points and Linkage Points needed to develop a new colonized star before the star will start producing ships. A negative value indicates that approximately $x+1$ rounds will go by before the star will start producing Resource Points.

Button Pad allows the mouse to change field values without using the keyboard (see Button Pad section of Button Pad).

Options Dialog Box

This dialog box is displayed when starting or restarting a game, and anytime during a game when the Options Button is clicked. The dialog box contains fields which affect the play of the game either visually or internally. The settings can be changed anytime. Options are broken into two groups, settings that affect how the star map is displayed on the screen and settings that affect a player.



Visible Stars/Links shows all stars and star links on the screen. Any player can then determine who controls what stars and the number of ships at each star.

Hidden Links Only displays all stars, star links a player knows about, and who controls stars adjoining a player's empire. This adds more challenge to the game by cloaking the whereabouts of hostile forces, and the star links between stars and star clusters.

Hidden Stars/Links displays only the stars and star links a player knows about and who controls stars adjoining a player's territory. This option comes closest to approximating the information that a computer player uses and is probably the most challenging.

Extra Stars/Hidden Links is a variation of Hidden Links Only. It adds the extra stars with no links to the star map that were generated when the Extra Stars option of the Initialization Dialog Box was selected.

Player Selection is made by clicking the down arrow next to the drop down list box, then clicking on the player's name from the list.

Player's Name can be changed in the edit box under the Player Selection drop down list box.

Computer player can be toggled on and off by clicking this check box. An X in this box indicates a computer player.

Player Trait Selection is made by using this drop down list box and clicking on the desired trait. The Player Trait Selection box is found under the Computer check box.

Player Trait Setting is made using the spin box located under the Player Trait Selection box. These traits are used by the game to make decisions for a player. A detailed description of traits can be found in the Player Traits section of Button Pad.

Color Button brings up the Color Selection Dialog Box.

Navigating the Star Map

The [star map](#) shows the stars and [star links](#) that are visible to a player. A player may view the full star map or zoom in to a smaller section. Once zoomed in, a player may shift the view, view a [Star Control Dialog Box](#), or zoom out to the full star map.

Related Topics:

[Zoom In](#)

[Zoom Out](#)

[Shifting the View](#)

[Star ID Field](#)

[Displaying the Star Control Dialog Box](#)

Zoom In

The player may zoom in on a section of the star map by placing the cursor at the desired position and double clicking the left mouse button. The star map is zoomed in and centered at the cursor position. When the star map is zoomed in, the Star ID Field is displayed for all visible stars.

Zoom Out

The player may return to the full map by clicking on the right mouse button when the cursor is anywhere on the star map.

Shifting the View

To center the view to another position when zoomed in, move the cursor to that position and double click the left mouse button. The view is then centered and zoomed in at this new position.

Star ID Field

The Star ID Field is the text field shown on the star map for each star. The Star ID Field is shown in the player's colors and consists of two parts. Part one is the star number which is unique for each star and is shown as a hexadecimal number. The second part is the number of ships in the fleet at this star and is shown as a decimal number.

Displaying the Star Control Dialog Box

To access a Star Control Dialog Box (complete description in the next section), you must be zoomed in so the Star ID Field is visible. Position the cursor in the upper left corner of the Star ID Field and click the left mouse button.

Movement

A ship can only move to one of the adjoining star each round. On a player's turn the game makes movement decisions for ships based upon the player's traits, and settings in the [Star Control Dialog Box](#). A human player may examine, modify and override movement decisions using the [Star Control Dialog Box](#). Once all star movement decisions are complete, clicking the Go Button advances to the next player. Once all players have selected their Ship Movement, Movement Resolution is performed by the game. During Movement Resolution, a [fleet](#) or ship transitions from one star to another star across the connecting star link. Fleets sent to adjoining stars will either colonize the star, merge with the fleet already there, or engage in combat.

Related Topics:

[Star Control Dialog Box](#)

Star Control Dialog Box

This dialog box shows the impending movement of a player's forces, allows the player to override the game's choices, and sets values the game uses to make movement decisions. The game will automatically distribute a player's forces across star links based on the Player's Traits, and the settings in this dialog box.



Caption Bar contains the player's name and hexadecimal star number.

Ships indicates the current number of ships at the star.

In Retreat indicates the number of incoming ships retreating from a combat that occurred during the previous round.

Fleet Route shows the star destination where ships will automatically be sent. A selection of ANY will allow the game to automatically make decisions based on the player's traits. When the Fleet Route is NONE, no ships will be sent to other stars. When Fleet Route is a star number, ships will always be sent to that star. The Fleet Route remains in effect until changed manually, changed by setting a Priority, or reset to ANY by the Clear Links Button.

Fleet Minimum indicates the smallest number of ships the game will send as a fleet to an adjoining star.

Garrison is the number of ships to be stationed at the star. When the number of ships at the star exceeds the Garrison value, the excess ships will be sent to adjoining stars based on the Fleet Route setting and Player Traits.

Auto Garrison causes the game to set the Garrison each round to the largest hostile force in an adjoining star. When Auto Garrison is set, it overrides the Garrison setting.

Garrison++ adds the number of ships in this field to the Garrison setting each round (Auto Garrison is applied first).

Fleets fields are edit boxes used to distribute a player's ships to adjoining stars. The Star ID Field to the right of the each fleet box shows the star number and the number of ships at the star in the colors of the player who controls that star. A player may distribute ships in any manner they desire. The total number of ships in the fleet fields must be one less than the number of ships at the star. Every star must have a Garrison of at least one ship.

Priority Distance spin box sets the number of consecutive star links used when the Priority Button is clicked (see Setting Priorities under Button Pad).

Priority Button causes all stars within the Priority Distance to route their ships to this star (see Setting Priorities under Button Pad). The Fleet Route of these stars is set to an adjoining star which is closer to the Priority star. The Fleet Route of the Priority star is set to NONE. Fleet Routes remain set until overridden manually, with another Priority, or reset to ANY by the Game Buttons.

Button Pad allows the mouse to change edit boxes without using the keyboard (see [Button Pad](#) section under [Button Pad](#)).

Combat

After movement is complete for all players, combat occurs at the stars where two or more players have fleets. The game checks each star for a combat situation and resolves each combat independently. When more than two fleets are at a star the game randomly decides which two fleets meet in combat first. After combat is resolved for the two fleets, the process is repeated until only one fleet remains.

Related Topics:

[Combat Resolution](#)

[Retreat](#)

[Combat Dialog Box](#)

Combat Resolution

When two fleets meet in combat, the combat continues until one fleet retreats from the star or one fleet is destroyed. Combat is a two step process. First both fleets attack simultaneously which is designated as one battle, then both fleets have the option to retreat or continue combat. The two steps are repeated until combat is finished by a fleet's destruction or retreat. If a player's fleet is annihilated in the first battle, the player receives no communication that the combat occurred. A human player should watch out for this on their borders lest a hostile force makes a large penetration before the player is aware of the incursion.

Retreat

A player can not retreat from a star if one or more of their fleets are in retreat to that star. A player can not retreat from a star if no viable retreat path exists. A viable retreat path is a star link to an adjoining star where the player has the only ships, or a contested star where the player has the majority of the ships. When a fleet retreats, that is the fleet's movement for the next Movement phase. They arrive at their destination star during the next Movement Resolution. When a player's retreating ships arrive at a star they control, the ships have time to rearm and refuel, even at a contested star. If the unthinkable happens and a player's retreating ships arrive at a star controlled by another player the ships are destroyed. Retreat path is determined by the game.

Combat Dialog Box

When a human player is involved in combat and their fleet survives the first battle, the Combat Dialog Box is displayed. The player can then make combat decisions. The Caption Bar of the dialog box shows the star number of the contested star. The name of each player in combat is displayed in their colors with the number of ships remaining in their fleet and number of ships lost in combat.



Retreat Button allows the players to retreat from combat to an adjoining star. The Retreat Button under a player's name retreats that player's ships. A computer player's Retreat Button is always disabled. When a human player's Retreat Button is disabled, it means that the game could not find a viable star to retreat to or the human player has forces retreating to this star from another combat that took place this round. When a Retreat Button is clicked, the player's fleet leaves the star and combat is over.

Do or Die Button causes all human controlled fleets in this combat to fight until one fleet remains. Once selected, the combat is completed without intervention from human players. Computer players still have the option to retreat after each battle. Note if two human players are involved in combat, they both need to agree to the Do or Die Button before it is selected.

Continue Button indicates a human player wishes to engage in another battle. If the computer player does not retreat, the next battle takes place. If both players still have ships after the battle, the decision to retreat or continue combat must be made. When two human players are involved in combat they both should agree before selecting the Continue Button.

Environment

Configuration File

Saved Games

Color Selection Dialog Box

Configuration File

The Configuration File allows the player to have their favorite game setup stored on disk to replace the default game setup. The Configuration File contains the information from the Initialization Dialog Box, Options Dialog Box, and the Color Selection Dialog Box. The information is retrieved from the file at game startup. The current game settings are saved to the Configuration File when the Configure Button is clicked. When the Configuration File is not present in the game's directory, the game will terminate.

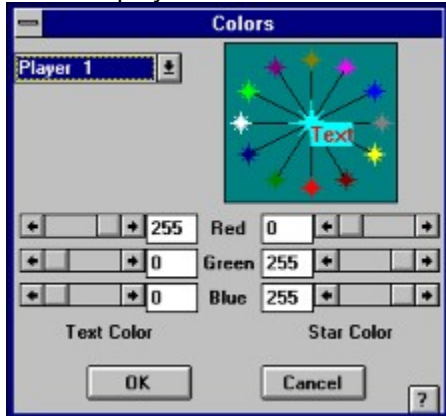
Saved Games

A player may save a game in progress by clicking the Files Button, then the Save or the Save As Button. A saved game may be retrieved by clicking the Files Button, then the Open Button. A saved game contains all information needed to continue the game from where it was saved. When a game is retrieved, the game environment is fully restored to the environment at the time the game was saved.

The number of saved games is only limited by the computers disk capacity.

Color Selection Dialog Box

This dialog box allows a player to change the color settings of the game. Any of the players' colors may be changed along with the uncolonized star color and the star map background color. This dialog box is displayed when the Color Button in the [Options Dialog Box](#) is clicked.



Color Display Window is located in the upper right corner of the dialog box and shows the colors as a player changes them. The central star displays the star color being changed and the star's text color being changed. The stars around the box edge show the colors of other players.

Player/Object Selector [drop down list box](#) allows selection of a player, uncolonized stars, or background. A player can then change the colors associated with the selection.

Text Color scroll bars allow the player to adjust the text color of the selected player or uncolonized stars. There is no text associated with the background color. A color is made up of the three hues: red, green and blue. Each hue has a value from 0 to 255 representing the intensity of the hue. The hues are adjusted individually until the desired color is reached. The change in color can be observed in the Color Display Window.

Star Color scroll bars allow the player to adjust the star color of the selected player, the uncolonized stars, or the background. Changes in the color can be observed in the Color Display Window. A color is made up of the three hues: red, green and blue. Each hue has a value from 0 to 255 representing the intensity of the hue. The hues are adjusted individually until the desired color is reached.

Buttons

In Stellar Empires an understanding of the buttons will make playing the game easier, quicker and more enjoyable. There are two sets of buttons, the Game Buttons located on the left side of the [star map](#) and the File Control Buttons that appear when the Files Button is pressed.

Related Topics:

[Game Buttons](#)

[File Control Buttons](#)

Game Buttons



About Button

This button displays a dialog box containing revision, copyright, tutorial, and registration information.



Files Button

The Files Button displays the File Control Buttons such as open, save, etc. (these are defined later in this section).



Exit Button

This button allows the player to exit Stellar Empires with confirmation.



New Game Button

This button allows the player to start a new game of Stellar Empires. The Initialization Dialog Box and the Options Dialog Box are displayed during game generation.



Restart Game Button

This button restarts the current game. The Initialization Dialog Box and the Options Dialog Box are displayed during game regeneration.



Options Button

The Options Dialog Box is displayed at the start of every game and when this button is clicked. These options are changeable throughout the game. Options include star map display, colors, Player Name, and Player Traits selection.



Statistics Button

The Statistics Button displays a dialog box showing information about all the players, such as number of stars controlled, total number of ships, and change in total number of ships since the last turn.



Home Star Button

This button centers and zooms in the star map on the current player's Home Star.



Clear Links Button

The Clear Links Button resets the Fleet Route field to ANY for all stars of the current player with confirmation.



Reset Garrison Button

This button resets the Garrison, Garrison++, Auto Garrison, and Minimum Fleet fields for all stars of the current player with confirmation.



Go Button

After a player is satisfied with the moves made on their current turn, this button starts the dice rolling and may the force be with you.

File Control Buttons

The File Control Buttons are displayed when the Files Button is clicked. These buttons allow saving and retrieving games, and saving and restoring the Configuration File.



Open Button is used to retrieve Saved Games. When selected, the standard Microsoft Windows file selection dialog box is displayed. The player may then select a game file listed in the window.

Save Button is used to save the game in progress. The game will overwrite the current game file (file selected by last open or save as operation). If no current game file exists the player is allowed to save the game to a new or old file.

Save As Button allows the player to enter a new or old file name to save the game in progress.

Save Configure Button allows the player to save the current configuration to the Configuration File. The new configuration will then be used as the default at game startup.

Cancel Button exits with no file action taken.

Button Pad

The Button Pad appears in several dialog boxes. It is designed to replace the keyboard when changing the values in edit boxes. Several buttons on the pad provide short cuts specifically tailored to the dialog box.



Number Buttons are used to enter a number.

<- Button or Delete Button is used to delete the last number in a edit box (equivalent to a backspace key).

- Button or Decrement Button is used to decrement the numeric value by 1 in the edit box.

+ Button or Increment Button is used to increment the numeric value by 1 in the edit box.

< Button or Back Tab Button is used to tab backward through the edit boxes supported by the Button Pad.

> Button or Tab Button is used to tab forward through the edit boxes supported by the Button Pad.

A Button or All Button is used in the fleet field of the Star Control Dialog Box. All of the star's available ships are set to move to the adjoining star indicated. All other fleets fields are set to 0.

R Button or Rest of Ships Button is used to send ships not already selected for movement to the adjoining star for a Fleets edit box.

C Button or Clear Button is used to set the edit box to its minimum (0 or 1).

CA Button or Clear All Button is used to set all edit boxes in a group to their minimum. In the Star Control Dialog Box, all fleet fields are a group and the Garrison, Garrison++, Auto Garrison and Fleet Minimum are a group.

Setting Priorities

A Priority is used to concentrate some or all of players forces at the indicated star. A Priority is set for a star by clicking the Priority Button, confirming the Priority and exiting the Star Control Dialog Box with the OK Button.

When a Priority is set:

- The Priority star is set to NONE and all fleet fields at that star are set to 0 (these settings may be overridden before exiting the Star Control Dialog Box).
- Prioritize each adjoining star that is controlled by the player, by setting the Fleet Route to the Priority star and redirecting all available ships to the Priority star.
- On a Priority Distance greater than one, repeat this step until the number of star links away from the Priority star equals the Priority Distance. Prioritize each star controlled by the player and adjoining a prioritized star, by setting the Fleet Route to the prioritized star and redirecting all available ships along the Fleet Route.

The setup occurs on the round that the Priority is set. All subsequent rounds depend upon the Fleet Route settings to direct ships in the desired direction. Multiple Priorities may be set each round, with the later Priorities having precedence over the earlier Priorities.

Priorities can be set for a variety of reasons: to concentrate forces for attack or defense, to withdraw forces before a superior force, and when facing multiple opponents so that they will attack each other while your forces increase.

Be aware that Priorities are set. Priorities can be removed by setting Fleet Routes individually or by setting all Fleet Routes to ANY with the Clear Links Button.

Player Traits

Traits are values the game uses to make movement decisions for a player. Traits for a computer player are randomly generated based on the [Difficulty](#). Traits for human players are retained from the previous game or set from the [Configuration File](#). Traits can be changed in the [Options Dialog Box](#).

Related Topics:

[Aggression Factor](#)

[Retreat Factor](#)

[Withdrawal Factor](#)

[Attack Pattern](#)

[Colony Pattern](#)

[Colony Depth](#)

[Priority Distance](#)

Aggression Factor

The Aggression Factor trait is applied when the game is making a decision to attack another player's star during Movement phase. The trait ranges from 0 to 15 with 15 being the most aggressive. The game will not make an attack decision for a human player when their Aggression Factor is 0.

Retreat Factor

The Retreat Factor trait is used when the game is making a decision to retreat from combat. This trait ranges from 0 to 15 with 15 having the highest probability of retreat. The game will not make a retreat decision for a human player. A human player makes a retreat decision from the Combat Dialog Box during combat.

Withdrawal Factor

This trait is for determining if a player should withdraw his force from a star in anticipation of a stronger hostile force attacking. The Withdrawal Factor ranges from 0 to 15 with 15 having the highest chance of withdrawal. The game will not make a withdrawal decision for a human player when their Withdrawal Factor is 0.

Attack Pattern

Attack Pattern trait is used to decide which star(s) to attack. Once a target star is chosen using the selected Attack Pattern, the game decides whether to attack using the Aggression Factor. Attack pattern ranges from 0 to 9.

- 0 Attack first hostile star in fleet field list.
- 1 Attack the star which has the strongest hostile force.
- 2 Pattern 1 and ships from adjoining stars also attack.
- 3 Pattern 2 and ships from adjoining stars do not attack if the target star is not their strongest opponent. When a star's ships are not attacking any stars, the game determines if a withdrawal is necessary and withdraws ships to an adjoining star if required.
- 4 Pattern 3 plus ships at adjoining stars do not attack the target star when they are not needed for the attack and when they are needed to face other opposition. On withdrawal determination, when the star is surrounded (the player does not control any adjoining star), determine whether to attack an adjoining star whose annexation will link the surrounded star with the player's empire.
- 5 Pattern 4 and when there are more than enough ships to attack the target star and there is more than one hostile star, determine whether to send the extra ships to attack other hostile stars. On a withdrawal determination, when the star is cut off from the empire (it can not be linked by annexation of one star), determine whether to rampage against hostile forces. Ramping will select a weaker hostile force and attack.
- 6 Pattern 5 with a different algorithm for attacking other hostile stars.
- 7 Pattern 5 with the option to send ships to attack other hostile stars after determining not to attack the main target star (the star with the large hostile fleet).
- 8 Pattern 7 with the attack algorithm of pattern 6.
- 9 The game randomly chooses one of the Attack Patterns each time it makes an attack decision for the player.

Colony Pattern

The Colony Pattern trait is used to decide what stars to colonize. Colony Pattern ranges from 0 to 8.

- 0 Colonize the last uncolonized star in the fleet field list.
- 1 Colonize the first uncolonized star in the fleet field list.
- 2 Spread ships evenly across all uncolonized stars. When the available ships will not spread evenly, spread the excess ships by starting with the first uncolonized star in the fleet field list and moving to the last uncolonized star in the fleet field list.
- 3 Spread ships evenly across all uncolonized stars. When the available ships will not spread evenly, spread the excess ships by starting with the last uncolonized star in the fleet field list and moving to the first uncolonized star in the fleet field list.
- 4 Colony Pattern 2 with the added feature of sending one ship to colonize each adjoining star and remaining ships move toward a hostile front due to Colony Depth.
- 5 Colony Pattern 3 with the added feature of sending one ship to colonize each adjoining star and remaining ships move toward a hostile front due to Colony Depth.
- 6 Colony Pattern 4 with the added feature of sending one ship to colonize each adjoining star and remaining ships are sent to the Fleet Route destination.
- 7 Colony Pattern 5 with the added feature of sending one ship to colonize each adjoining star and remaining ships are sent to the Fleet Route destination.
- 8 The game randomly chooses one of the other Colony Patterns each time it makes a colonization decision.

Colony Depth

Colony Depth is the trait used by the game in determining whether a star will send its ships towards the closest uncolonized star or the closest hostile star.

When Colony Depth is 0 the game will send ships to the uncolonized star when the number of star links to the uncolonized star is less than the number of star links to a hostile star. As Colony Depth is increased the game will send ships to the uncolonized star when the number of star links to the uncolonized star plus the Colony Depth is less than the number of star links to the hostile star. This means that the higher the Colony Depth the more ships that will migrate towards a hostile star. This number ranges between 0 and 15.

Priority Distance

Priority Distance is the number of star links used when Setting Priorities in the Star Control Dialog Box. The distance ranges from 1 to 99 and should be set before selecting the Priority Button.

Difficulty

The higher the Difficulty, the smarter the computer players. Difficulty controls the range of numbers available to computer players for specific traits (Attack Pattern, etc.). A low Difficulty would allow the game to set low valued traits for the computer players and a high Difficulty would allow the game to set high valued traits. Difficulty ranges from 0 to 9.

Strategy and Tactics

Strategies

Tactics

Strategies

Here are some general strategic ideas.

- The more stars you control the more ships you produce.
- Early in the game it is better to hold an opponent off while you colonize other stars.
- A two front war is a dangerous situation unless you are stronger than both empires. Try to overcome one opponent quickly before attacking the other even when this means giving up ground.
- Home Star ship production capacity is on the average 5 times better than other stars so try not to lose your Home Star. Even if you get it back its production is never the same.
- When facing a stronger opponent try sending a rampaging force into their territory. This might distract them long enough so that you can pick up a number of their border stars.
- In general good trait settings for a human player are: Aggression Factor 7-10, Withdrawal Factor 0-4, Attack Pattern 5-8, Colony Pattern 4-7, and Colony Depth 0-2.

Tactics

Now for some tactics.

- Do not attack a stronger fleet unless they are very close to you in strength and there is a strategic reason to annex their star.
- Take anticipated reinforcements into account when deciding to attack a star.
- Withdraw before a superior force, rather than lose a higher percentage of ships and being forced to retreat.
- Try to trap enemy forces and annihilate them with a superior force.
- Lead stronger forces to another player so they will engage the other player thus diverting some of their forces from you.
- When a force is rampaging, be careful that it always moves ahead of the stronger force pursuing it or you will lose it.
- If you know another player will win the game, form an alliance to see if you can change the outcome.
- All occurrences (attack, withdrawal, etc.) have a random factor applied to add spice to the game. For example, a hostile force that is 5 times stronger than you which is very aggressive may not attack, just this once!

Glossary of Terms

[Drop Down List Box](#)

[Fleet](#)

[Garrison](#)

[Linkage Points](#)

[Rampage](#)

[Resource Points](#)

[Star Cluster](#)

[Star Links](#)

[Star Map](#)

Drop Down List Box

A list box gives a column of choices. This type of list box is a list box where only the selected choice is displayed until the down arrow at the right of the box is clicked. When the arrow is clicked, the list appears and a player may select from the list. If no change is desired, click the down arrow again.

Fleet

Any group of one or more ships.

Garrison

The number of ships which are stationed at a star. The game requires a minimum of one ship. A player can vary the number for strategic reasons.

Linkage Points

When a player controls the stars on both ends of a star link, then each star receives an extra Resource Point.

Rampage

To send a fleet of ships into another player's empire, with the object of getting the other player to divert ships to handle this problem and resulting in fewer ships being sent to attack your empire.

Resource Points

Stars generate these points each round. They represent the manufacturing capability and natural resources of a star and the stability of trade between two stars (Linkage Points). These points are used to produce ships.

Star Cluster

A group of related stars which have the same two digit designation as the first part of their star number.

Star Links

The gravimetric connection between two stars. These connections allow faster than light travel between stars. The reasons why some links exist and others do not are still up for debate.

Star Map

Map of stars and [star links](#).



Tahuya Bay Software

PO Box 838

Silverdale, WA, USA 98383-0838

(206) 692-0371

