

Winroids Help (v2.0)

Welcome to Winroids, a fully featured arcade game for Windows (TM).

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Winroids is copyrighted software and is shareware, not free - please read the section on "Registering" (or just feel guilty about it).

Please also read the disclaimer!

Winroids... so what is it?

Winroids is a version of the classic arcade game "Asteroids", lovingly crafted for the Windows environment. It features raytraced graphics, fast action and full multimedia sound.

System Requirements

- Winroids requires a fast 386DX or 486 to be really playable... though it should run on just about anything. (It's fine on my 386-33, and still playable on a friends 386-25)
- Windows 3.1
- A graphics card that supports 256 colours (optional)
- A soundcard (optional)

Winroids will automatically use either the 16 or 256 colour versions of its sprites, depending on the capabilities of your display.

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What do I do?

In short... shoot things. Pretty much anything that moves in fact.

You can rotate your ship left and right, fire bullets, activate your shield and also fire your thrusters to move yourself around.



Your ship

Try not to dent it.

To start a new game select "New Game" from the file menu.

To pause the game select "Pause" from the file menu.

To abort a game select "Abort Game" from the file menu.

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So what do I shoot at?...



Asteroids.

The object of the game is to get rid of all of the asteroids on each screen. When you shoot them they break up into smaller and smaller chunks until finally they disappear.



Steel Balls

Shooting at these does them no damage whatsoever, but the impact of your bullets will alter their speed and direction.



Aliens

These green meanies are dangerous. If one wanders onto the screen, shoot it quickly.

... and what don't I shoot at?



Gadget Parcels *(Fully compliant with EC directive no 1,845,633,786)*

These are gifts from home... they could be retro-rockets to help control your ship, auto fire pods to relieve your fire key and your fingers, fuel for your shield or an extra ship. Alternatively they might be empty... but that's bureaucracy for you. Run them over with your ship to pick them up.

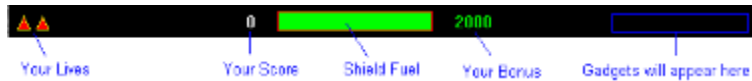
If a gadget parcel is left untouched for too long it will self-destruct to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

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The Screen

The screen is split into two sections. The top bit is where all the action takes place and should be pretty self-explanatory.

The bottom part consists of a status bar :



The lives show the number of ships you have remaining.

Your shield fuel goes down quickly whenever you use your shield.

The bonus counts down on each level.

Gadgets

You get gadgets by picking up Gadget Parcels. Some have an instant effect - such as recharging your shield or giving you an extra life. Others give your ship new abilities. These abilities show up as icons :



Retro thrusters. These slow your ship down gradually when you are moving.



Auto fire. Just hold down the fire key...



Spray fire. Fires three shots at once.



Protect. Stops you losing other presents when you next get killed.



Indicates that a bomb is active. A bomb will have the effect of hitting every roid once -

this can be dangerous!

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Keyboard

The default keys are :

Rotate Left	- "Z"
Rotate Right	- "X"
Fire	- "M"
Thrust	- "L"
Shield	- "Space"

These keys are re-definable through the [Options](#) dialog.

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Options and stuff

The options dialog

To get at the options dialog, select "Options..." from the "File" menu.

Sound

To turn all sound on or off, check the "Sound" check box.

If Winroids cannot find a sound device that will support asynchronous digital audio then this option will be disabled. The PC speaker driver does not support asynchronous audio.

Midi Files

To select a midi file to play during the game, type it's name or select it in the "Midi file" list box. The list box shows all the midi files in the "Winroids" directory.

If you do not wish to play a midi file, select "(None)".

Keyboard

To change the key for a particular function, click on the button of the function you wish to change and then press the new key,

To reset the keys to their defaults click on "Default Keys".

Sprite size

With normal sized sprites, Winroids will use the entire screen in a 640x480 graphics mode. With large sprites, Winroids will use the entire screen in 800x600 mode. Take your pick, but bear in mind that larger sprites require more CPU power and more memory. If the graphics are jerky, or Winroids complains that it is out of memory, switch back to normal sprites.

This option will be disabled if your screen resolution is less than 800x600.

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Speed Tips

Winroids pushes most systems (mine especially) to the limit. If you are finding that the graphics are not fast enough, here's some hints and tips... (in order, from sensible to silly).

1. Use normal sized sprites instead of large sprites
2. Use a low colour graphics mode
3. Get the latest graphics drivers from your video card manufacturer.
4. Don't play a midi file while playing the game.
5. Switch off the sound altogether - this may prevent the graphics becoming "jerky" on slower machines.
6. Buy a faster graphics card.
7. Buy a faster computer.

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What to do if it all goes horribly wrong

In order to work properly, Winroids is rather dependent on two things - the display driver and the soundcard driver (if you have a soundcard). It also requires rather a lot of memory.

If Winroids fails to run properly on your system try the following things first:

1. If you have a soundcard, try running Winroids with the sound switched off in the options dialog. If this cures the problem, the fault may be with your sound drivers. Try contacting the sound card manufacturer to see whether there are any newer drivers around.
2. Try running Winroids using the standard VGA driver that comes with Windows. If this cures the problem, the fault may lie with your graphics card drivers, or it may be that the system was becoming disastrously low on memory (see below). Try using a different graphics mode or contact the graphics card manufacturer to see whether newer drivers are available.
3. Winroids may complain that it is out of memory when loading its sprites. If this happens, try closing other applications to free up some memory. If you still don't have any success, try using a lower-colour graphics mode or normal sized sprites (Winroids uses less memory in lower-colour graphics modes).

If Winroids still doesn't work after all that, please contact me and I'll try and investigate your problem!

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Frequently asked questions

Q: "Why does Winroids take so long to start up? I get bored!"

A: "Winroids uses a cunning resource compression scheme to prevent it taking up too much hard disk space. The wait is due to Winroids having to decompress its resources."

Q: "Why doesn't Winroids use more than 256 colours?"

A: "The graphics take up a lot of space... the more colours the more space. 256 colours is a pretty good trade-off. To be honest, I don't think you'd really see the difference between 256 colours and truecolour - the sprites just aren't large enough."

Q: "Winroids runs really slowly with large sprites and 24 bit colour."

A: "Yes, it does."

Q: "Can I have the source code?"

A: "No. I would however be quite happy to try and answer any Windows games programming queries people might have (not that I'm any particular expert...)"

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Known Bugs

Older versions of the Gravis Ultrasound drivers intermittently caused the system to hang when playing Winroids. These problems were traced to faults in the GUS drivers, and have been corrected in newer driver releases.

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Registering

This game is not free - it is shareware. This means that you are allowed to try this game out for a maximum of 21 days, after that you must either register (by sending me some money), or remove it from your system.

I do not believe in high registration fees since people simply will not pay. For this reason, the registration fee for Winroids is only £10 for UK users, \$20 for US users, or the nearest equivalent for other countries. Personal cheques drawn on foreign banks are fine!

Please be generous and register this software.

The address for registration is :

Stephen Baxter,
132 Portland Street,
Norwich,
NR2 3LF,
United Kingdom

+44 (603) 662758

My internet address is:

u9118802@uea.ac.uk

Please feel free to contact me if you have any enquiries.

Winroids is protected by UK and international copyright law.

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Credits

All coding and graphics by Stephen Baxter.
Music "Winroids.mid" and "Dreams.mid" by Matt Weston.

The raytraced graphics were produced using the most excellent "Persistence of vision" raytracer. POV is freeware and should be available from all good shareware distributors.

Many thanks (in no particular order) to :

Graham Cox for help, support and code ideas.
Laura Knight for hitting the pan.
Pete Bloxam for coffee.
Pete's Mum for chocolate cake.
Clare Francis for more coffee.
James Tansey for both tea and coffee in roughly equal amounts.
Diane Battison, Fiona Duke, Ed Haynes, Ed's housemates and all of the above for play testing.
Atlantic College for my outlook on life.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any enquiries. My address and E-Mail ID are on the [Registration](#) page. I am open to any suggestions and ideas for improvements. This is my first ever Windows application (well the first proper one anyway) so please go easy on me!

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Coming soon to a computer screen near you...

Winroids for the Apple Macintosh courtesy of Graham Cox. Maybe!
Bad Day Simulator II Pro (and you thought BDS just couldn't get any better!)

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