Stellar Explorer v2.0b Index

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This program was developed using the Microsoft C/C++ 7.0 compiler and Windows 3.1 SDK.

The Index contains a list of all Help topics available for Stellar Explorer.   You can obtain detailed information about each topic by clicking the underlined items (also shown in highlighted text).

About Stellar Explorer

This game is a representation of the original Star Trek(TM) game written for the PDP-11 at Dartmouth in the early 70's.   Though many effects have been enhanced, the playability of the game remains similar to the original.

The galaxy consists of a 10x10 matrix, each cell representing a quadrant in the galaxy. Each quadrant is then broken down into a 10x10 grid of sectors.   The long-range scan and galaxy map show information on all quadrants in the galaxy.   The short-range scan shows a detailed level of each quadrant by breaking it down into sectors.

The object of the game is to destroy all the aliens before either they destroy you or you run out of energy.   You have control of a warp engines, shields, phasers and photons, and a computer if necessary.   Docking at a starbase gives you complete replenishment of fuel, photons and full repairs of all systems.   You can have a maximum of 7 photons at your disposal and are replenished with that amount when at a starbase.   Sitting at a starbase while firing on aliens within a sector will not allow you to be invincible.   In order to re-dock at a starbase, you must leave and re-enter the grid area where the starbase is located.   If all your starbases are destroyed, either by enemy fire or by your own doing, the game will also conclude.

Stellar Explorer was developed using our custom internal Windows libraries.   If you are interested is using these libraries for your application development, please contact us.

About Technological Computer Innovations

Technological Computer Innovations Corporation (TCI) specializes in custom software development in the MS-Windows (tm) environment.   We maintain a staff of expert programmers to fulfill any development needs.   If you have any application programming needs, please contact us.

Please feel free to contact us with suggestions for enhancements to Stellar Explorer or other programs you would like to see.

Technological Computer Innovations Corp.
255 N. Cherrywood Drive
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If you have not already mailed in your registration card for Stellar Explorer, please do so.

System Requirements

A 286-based DOS-compatible computer
2 MB of RAM
2 MB of available hard disk space
Microsoft Windows 3.1
Mouse or other pointing input device
VGA display resolution or higher (uses 16 colors)
MPC sound card (optional)

Recommended:

A 386-based 25-MHz (or higher) DOS-compatible computer, 2 MB of RAM, a 40 MB hard disk, a VGA display, a mouse or other pointer and MPC sound board.

Stellar Explorer was developed on a Gateway 486-50 MHz DX2 system.   If you have problems running on your system, please contact us with a description of the problem and we will send you an update free of charge.

There are known problems running with various Windows video drivers.   The game was developed for VGA resolution using small font drivers.   It works fine in 800x600, 1024x768 and 8514/A modes, presuming these drivers use the small fonts.

Sound Support

There are sound effects that are routed to your system's MPC sound board (if supported and installed).

MIDI sound output is used for playing various sounds while the photon is in motion.   By default, this MIDI output is directed to the MIDI mapper.   Be sure that your MIDI mapper is set to channel MIDI sound to the FM sound board in your system or that MIDI devices are connected and properly set.

To turn sound on or off, bring up the Options dialog box and check the sound checkbox. Also, **F5** will toggle the sound on and off, but this method will not save to the STELLAR.INI file.

Game Play

Basics

The object of Stellar Explorer is to eliminate all of the aliens before you are destroyed. You can determine how many aliens you have to destroy by looking at the **Aliens:** field in the control dialog. You will have to destroy all of the aliens in order to win. If your energy level reaches zero or you are destroyed by an alien attack, you have lost and the game ends. In this version, the aliens will not attack starbases, but you have the ability to destroy your own starbases. If you destroy all your starbases, you will lose the game.

You have warp engines which allow you to navigate around the galaxy and within quadrants. You also have two different types of weapons -- Phasers and Photons -- which allow you to shoot at and destroy the aliens. The aliens will also be firing at you throughout the game. The game was designed to allow "turns" to be taken. When entering a quadrant with aliens, they will fire upon you. When finished, it will be your turn to either fire back or run away. Thus, in this version, aliens will not fire continuously, but await your next move before returning more fire.

The galaxy is broken up into quadrants and the quadrants are broken up into sectors. A long range scan gives you an indication of what starbases and aliens are in the adjoining quadrants and a short range scan shows you all the sectors of a given quadrant.

You will need to pay special attention to your energy level and the condition of all of your onboard systems. The replenishment of your energy and all system repairs will be conducted upon docking with a starbase.
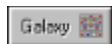

Galaxy Map

The galaxy map shows you what areas of the galaxy that you've "uncovered" with the Long-Range scan. Viewing the galaxy map does not require any energy and does not constitute a turn.
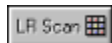
Long-Range Scan

The long-range scan is used to view what is in your quadrant (from a galaxy point of view) and adjoining quadrants. The long-range scan records this information to the galaxy map and requires 50 units of energy to do so. It is helpful to locate aliens and starbases in surrounding quadrants.
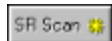
Short-Range Scan

The short-range scan gives a detailed look at what is in your current quadrant. You must be viewing the short-range scan to fire upon aliens and dock with starbases. When viewing the short-range scan, warping is done within a quadrant.

Warp

Using the warp drive consists of selecting a direction for warp (using the directional controls)

and then selecting an amount of energy.   (One unit of energy will take you one space away from your current location.)   Warping while viewing the galaxy map or long-range scan will move your ship across sectors, while using the warp engines while in the short-range scan will allow you to warp within that sector.   The warp engines are susceptible to damage from alien fire.   If engines are damaged, they may fail when attempting to warp.   If this is the case, attempt to locate and dock with a starbase for repairs.

Computer

The computer requires 100 units of energy to bring up.   Available options are hyperspace (2500 units of energy), finding the nearest starbase (1000 units of energy) or finding the nearest alien (2000 units of energy).   Using these functions should be for emergency situations as they require a lot of energy.

Shields

Shields help prevent alien fire from damaging your ship.   They also require more energy when they are up.   As you cannot engage warp drive with the shields up, the shields are lowered automatically when the warp drive is engaged.   Shields are raised automatically when entering a quadrant containing alien ships.

Weapons

Phasers

Phasers will disperse energy fired amongst the aliens in the current sector (i.e. phaser fire of 900 units with 3 aliens in the sector will yield 300 units of energy being directed at each alien).   Though phasers do not ensure a kill, your ship does not have to be aligned with an alien to hit it.   This weapon is effective when something is blocking the path of a possible photon or when there are multiple aliens within a sector.

Photons

Although photons are more effective weapons (they ensure a kill if they hit an alien), they require your ship to be aligned with an alien on a direct course (at 45 or 90 degree angles). Photons also require 500 units of energy to fire and you have a limited arsenal of them (7 maximum).   Docking with a starbase replenishes your supply of seven photon torpedoes.
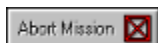
Aborting

Aborting the mission will show the entire galaxy map -- revealing the locations of all remaining aliens and starbases.

Damage

As aliens fire upon you ship, certain controls and functions may become damaged.   If this occurs, you will want to dock with one of your starbases to repair these damages. Damaged items will be indicated in the status area (lower part) of the control panel. When items become damaged, their reliability decreases proportionally to the damage they have received.   If the engines are damaged and thus at 75% effeciency, there is a 3

in 4 chance they will work properly.

Double-click on the **About Stellar Explorer...** dialog box.

If you can find a screwdriver, the screws in the main window may be removed!

Suggestions

The best defense is always a good offense.   You should hit the aliens as hard as possible, watching your status and energy readings.   If you get too heavily damaged and your energy is running low, you must find and dock with a starbase to repair your ship and replenish your energy.   When in doubt, the computer can be accessed to help you in hazardous situations.

The higher skill levels require you to raise shields manually.   Though they may be damaged, they do prevent a direct hit from crippling your ship.   Again, a starbase is a great help in repairing damages and replenishing energy.

File Menu

New
Start a new game.   A dialog box will allow you to select a skill level when starting a new game.

Load Game
Loads a saved game from disk.

Save Game
Saves a current game to disk.

Options
Game options (controls sound on/off, 3-D Windows effects, and animation delay).

High Scores
Shows the high score dialog box.

Sound
Toggles the sound.   A checkmark will indicate whether the sound is turned on (checked) or off.

Exit
Exit Stellar Explorer.

Control Menu

Galaxy Map
  View the 10x10 matrix of the galaxy and where you've used the LRS.

Long Range Scan
  View the current and immediately surrounding sectors.

Short Range Scan
  View the 10x10 matrix of the current sector.

Computer
  Find the nearest starbase or alien or allow entering hyperspace.

Status
  Brings up a status dialog box.

Shields
  Toggle the shields ON/OFF.

Warp
  Engage the warp engine.

Fire Phaser
  Fire phasers at any enemies in the sector.

Fire Photon
  Fire a photon at any enemies in the sector.

Abort
  Abort the mission.

Help Menu

Help
  Bring up this Stellar Explorer Help file.

Using Help
  Brings up the Windows Using Help topic.

Key Help
  Bring up a dialog box showing the various objects within the game.

About TCI...
  About Technological Computer Innovations Corporation.

About Stellar Explorer
  Information about the game.

Planned Enhancements

Future revisions and enhancements depend on user feedback and contributions.   The more ideas and funding we receive, the more able we will be to implement new features.   We welcome all comments and funding for the further development of Stellar Explorer.

Suggestions

Please send your suggestions for game improvements and enhancements to:

Technological Computer Innovations Corporation
255 N. Cherrywood Drive
Lafayette, CO 80026-2726

or FAX them to (303) 673-9085

If your ideas are used, your name will be credited in the subsequent program release.

How to Register

If you have not registered your name and address, please send the following information to us so we can keep you updated of future releases and other new products.

Name: _____

Address: _____

            _____

City: _____State: _____ZIP:_____

Phone: (___) _____

Comments: _____

            _____

            _____

            _____

            _____

To: Technological Computer Innovations Corporation
      255 N. Cherrywood Drive
      Lafayette, CO 80026-2726

You will receive a registered copy of the game and information on other programs that are being developed by TCI.

(You can print this topic by choosing the **File** menu and selecting **Print Topic**.)

Galaxy

Galaxy Map

The Galaxy Map shows a summary of where you have been and have invoked the long range scan.   Your current position will be highlighted in yellow.   Quadrants with starbases will be highlighted in white and quadrants with aliens will be shown in red.   Void quadrants will be shown in black.   A two-digit number is used to represent each sector: the first number shows the number of aliens in the sector; the second shows the number of starbases.
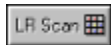
Long Range Scan

The long range scan is used to view what is located in sectors surrounding your current sector.   Viewing the long-range scan from various positions in the galaxy builds the galaxy map.   Essentially, the long-range scan is a small view of the galaxy map.

The above Long-Range Scan diagram clip shows the player in the quadrant with the "00" in yellow.   The quadrants with red numbering show that there are aliens present within that quadrant.   The white "01" represents a starbase and no aliens.   The quadrants with numbers in blue have neither aliens nor starbases present.

SR Scan

Short Range Scan

The short range scan is used to give a detailed breakdown of what is located within the current sector.

Your ship is represented by the symbol.   When shields are up, your ship changes to look like:
.

Aliens are depicted in the short-range scan by the following symbols: ,
, and
.   If aliens are located within the current sector of the galaxy, you will be placed in a red alert condition.

Starbases are represented by the symbol .   To dock with a starbase, use your impulse engines to move your ship to the same location as the starbase.   In the easier levels of play, docking with a starbase automatically repairs functions that have been damaged.   In the higher skill levels, a dialog box will be presented, querying which functions you want to have repaired and what they will cost to fix (in stardates).   Also - in the higher skill levels, you may not dock with a starbase while in a red alert condition.

In some areas, you may see planets in the short-range scan.   They look like:
 and
.   To land on a planet, use your impulse engines to place your ship on the same quadrant location as the planet.   This will invoke the transporter control so that you may send a party down to the planet's surface.

NOTE: Though the transporter is operative, all planets in v2.0 are unstable, so you may not explore them until the next release of Stellar Explorer.

Warp

In order to warp you must select a direction and amount of engine power.   You will move across quadrants if currently at the long range scan or galaxy map.   If you are viewing the short range scan, you will use the impulse engines to move within your current quadrant.

Phasers

Phasers may only be fired while viewing the short range scan.   If no aliens are present in the current sector, phasers will be inoperative.   Phasers are an effective weapon when multiple aliens are present in the current quadrant or when your ship is not aligned with an alien to use a photon.

To fire phasers, select the amount of energy (100-2500) to fire.   If one alien exists, all the energy will be focused on the single alien.   If more than one alien is present in the current sector, you will be presented with a dialog box.   This dialog will ask if you want to disperse the energy amongst all the aliens in the sector, or focus the energy on one alien.   If the energy is dispersed, all aliens will be hit with equal amounts of energy (i.e. if you fire 1000 units of energy between two aliens, each will be hit with 500 units).   If the energy is focused, the computer will decide which alien will be hit with the energy.

Photons

Photons may only be fired while viewing the short range scan.   For photons, a direction is selected for which the photon will follow.   The photon will continue on its course until hitting an object (alien, star, starbase) or reaching the edge of the quadrant grid.   Be careful not to destroy your starbases as this will result in the aliens winning the game.

Photons will destroy an alien if hit, but they also require direct alignment between your ship and the alien ship and 500 units of energy to fire.
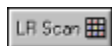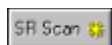
Control Panel
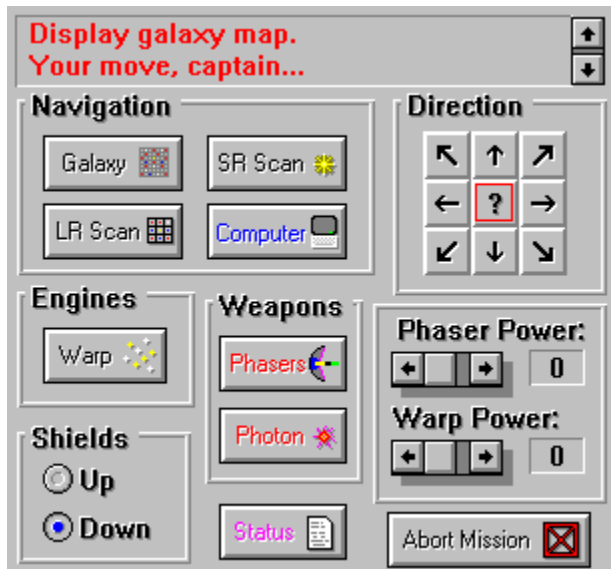
The message area in red (currently "Select direction for warp.") provides status messages about the game and current conditions.   This is a listbox with up and down scroll arrows.   You may use these arrows to view messages that have scrolled up.   The current message is always displayed last in the list.

Brings up the galaxy map.

Brings up the long-range scan.

Brings up the short-range scan of the current quadrant.

Brings up the computer dialog box.

Engages the warp engines.

--OR--

Engages the impulse engines.

Fires the phasers.

Photon

Fires a photon in the currently selected direction.

Status

Brings up the status dialog.

Abort Mission

Aborts the current game.

Direction:

The center area (highlighted in red) shows the direction currently selected.   If there is a question mark here it is because no direction has been selected.   Press the direction buttons on the outside to select direction.   The directional control is used for warp drive and photon firing.

Shields:

Controls the shields (up or down).

Phaser Power:

Sets the power for the phasers to fire.
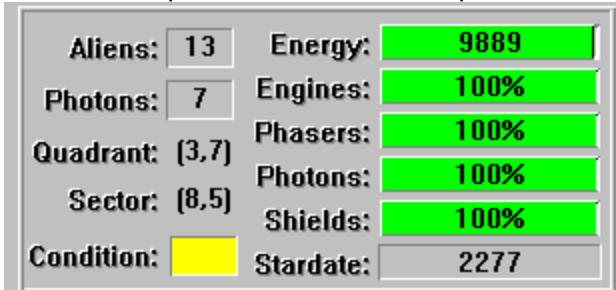
Engine Power:

Sets the power for warp drive.

The bottom portion of the control panel shows status information for the current game:

Aliens:	13	Energy:	9889
Photons:	7	Engines:	100%
Quadrant:	[3,7]	Phasers:	100%
Sector:	[8,5]	Photons:	100%
		Shields:	100%
Condition:		Stardate:	2277

The condition can be one of three colors:

GREEN   No aliens in present or surrounding quadrants.
YELLOW   Aliens are present in immediate surrounding quadrants.
**RED**   Aliens are present in the current quadrant.

Computer

The computer is used for the following functions:

1. To locate the nearest starbase from your current quadrant location.
2. To locate the nearest alien from your current quadrant location.
3. To enter hyperspace (random placing in the galaxy) to elude aliens in the current quadrant.

To invoke the computer, either press the button from the control dialog or select the menu option for the computer.   A dialog box will be display as follows:
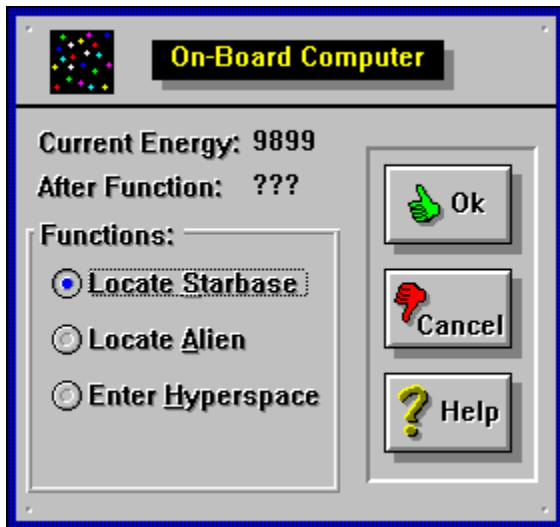
Select a function and then press "OK" to process the function or "Cancel" to abort the process.   Bringing up the computer dialog requires 100 units of energy and the various functions require the following amounts of energy:

Locate Starbase: 1000 units
Locate Alien: 2000 units
Hyperspace: 2500 units

The above field on the dialog box labeled "After Function:" will tell you how much energy will remain after completing the function selected.   If the dialog box comes up and some of the functions are not available (grayed), this is because there is not enough energy to complete these functions.

When the Locate Starbase or Locate Alien function is selected, either a magenta or green box will highlight the quadrant in the LRS or Galaxy map, depicting where the object is located.   A message will also appear in the message box stating where the object is located.

☑️
Options Dialog

The "3D Effects" radio butons are used to give the windows a 3D effect.   Select which effect you want and click "OK" to keep the change.

The animation delay scrollbar is used to change various effects speeds on your system.   Set this value to make the speed of the game playable if you are experiencing timing problems with animation on your system.   The higher the value, the greater delay for animation and zoom effects.   This value should be low for slower systems (386-25 MHz) and higher for faster (486 > 33MHz) systems.

The "Sound On" check box is used to toggle the sound off and on.   Check this box if you want to use sound.   Sound will only be available if you have either multimedia extensions or Windows 3.1 and the proper sound board and drivers.

Options selected here are saved into the STELLAR.INI file when "OK" is pressed.   If the Cancel button is pressed, no options are changed and thus are not stored in the .INI file.

High Scores

The high scores dialog box shows the names and scores of the top five high scores.   Scores are determined by the number of aliens defeated in a winning game.   These scores are saved into the STELLAR.INI file located in the same path as the executable file STELLAR.EXE. If you wish to clear the high scores, remove the HighScore= entries from the STELLAR.INI file.

Abort

Selecting abort will bring up a message box asking you to confirm whether or not you wish to abort the current game.   If you answer "Yes", the game will end and the complete galaxy will be revealed to show where all aliens and starbases were located.

📖

Glossary

Computer

Used to find aliens and starbases or enter hyperspace.   Can be brought up by menu option or button in the control dialog.

Engine Power

This scrollbar allows you to control how much power is used for the warp engines.   Each unit of power will take you one sector (if in Short-Range scan) or one quadrant (Long-Range Scan or Galaxy Map) in the direction selected in the directional control.

Long-Range Scan

This view shows the quadrants immediately surrounding your ship, including the one you are presently occupying.   Two-digit numbers are used to show the number of aliens and number of starbases in each respective quadrant.   For example, if a quadrant has a "20" on it, that means there are two aliens and zero starbases within that quadrant.

MIDI Mapper

Control panel applet in Windows 3.1 that directs MIDI output from programs to installed MIDI devices.   See the Windows 3.1 user's reference manual for more information.

Phaser Power

This scrollbar allows you to control how much energy is used when firing phasers.   The more energy directed to the phasers, the more powerful they will be when hitting alien ships.   However, when firing phasers, this amount is directly drained from your ship's supply.   If you expend too much energy using phasers, the game will be over.

Phasers

Weapon used by player and aliens.   Works best when attacking multiple aliens within the same quadrant.   The player can determine how much energy is routed to phasers by the Phaser Power scrollbar.

Photons

Weapon used to attack aliens when directly aligned (horizontally, vertically or diagonally). If photons are working and they are available, a photon hit ensures destruction.   Photons require 500 units of energy per shot.

Quadrant

Each cell within the 10 x 10 galaxy.

Sector

Division of each quadrant - also smallest area that can be occupied.   Alien ships, stars,

and the player's ship each occupy a sector.

Short-Range Scan

A detailed view of the current quadrant showing your ship, alien ships, starbases and stars. This view is used for docking with a starbase and fighting alien ships.

Starbase

HQ for player's ship.   When landing on the same sector as a starbase in Short-Range Scan, the player's ship is repaired, and energy and photons are replenished.

Function Keys:

The following function keys are available in Stellar Explorer:

Help Index

New game

Abort mission

Options

Toggles sound ON/OFF

Help Key

Exit

v2.0
Version 2.0b Enhancements

Phasers have been colored: the aliens fire **red** phasers and you fire **green** phasers.

Owner-drawn buttons have replaced the standard buttons on the Stellar Explorer Control window.   3D effects have now been added to more parts of the interface.   Most of the new functionality has been built from internal C/C++ development libraries.   If you are interested in these development libraries for your projects, please give us a call.

Skill levels have been added so you can choose your level of difficulty when starting a new game.   The skill levels are as follows:

Skill Level	Aliens	Starbases
Cadet	5-15	6
Ensign	15-25	5
Lieutenant	25-35	5
Commander	35-45	4
Captain	45-55	4
Admiral	55-65	3

Games are now played against time (stardates).   If you do not finish your mission before the allotted time, the aliens will overtake your starbases and defeat you.

Aliens now have the ability to move when it is their turn.   However, they can only move within the current quadrant.

In the top four levels of play (Lieutenant, Commander, Captain or Admiral) aliens may move in real-time.   In the top two levels of play (Captain or Admiral), aliens will fire every twelve seconds.

Shields are raised automatically in the first three levels of play (cadet, ensign, lieutenant). In the more difficult levels of play, shields must still be raised by your command (radio buttons or menu option).

 Games may now be saved/loaded to/from disk.

If you land on top of a planet in the short-range scan, you may use the transporter to get to the planet's surface.   If conditions are not stable, you will not be permitted to stay on the planet and you will be forced to return to your ship.

New Game

When starting a new game, the following dialog will allow you to select a level of play. Clicking on the desired radio button will change the number of aliens and stardates you have to complete your mission.   When you are satistied with these numbers, press "Ok" to begin the new game.

Technological Computer Innovations License Agreement

Stellar Explorer v2.0

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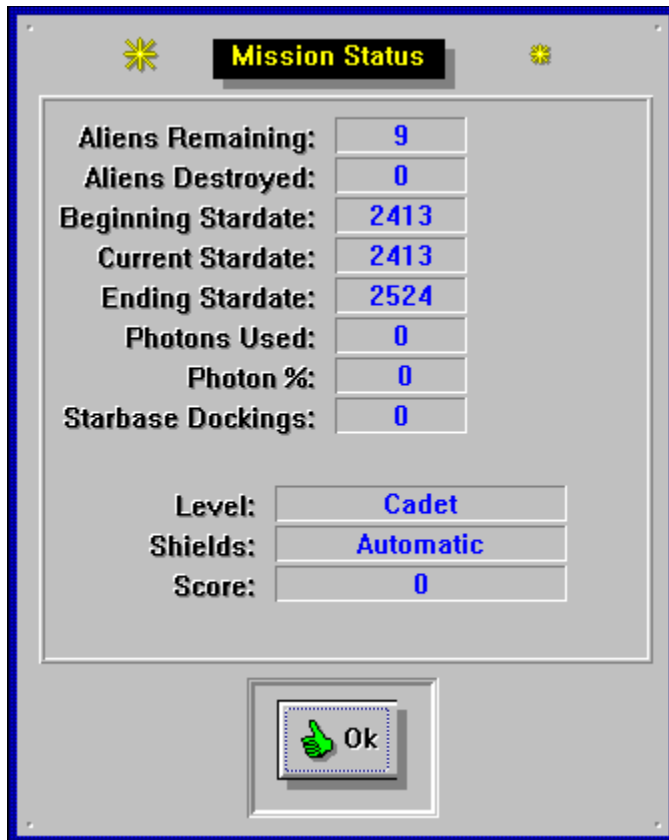
LIMITED WARRANTY

TCI warrants that the software will perform substantially in accordance with the accompanying written materials for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of receipt.

If you have any questions relating to this agreement, please contact Technological Computer Innovations Corporation, 255 N. Cherrywood Drive, Lafayette, CO   80026-2726, (303) 673-9046.

Status

The status dialog gives detailed information about the current game.

Mission Status

Aliens Remaining:	9
Aliens Destroyed:	0
Beginning Stardate:	2413
Current Stardate:	2413
Ending Stardate:	2524
Photons Used:	0
Photon %:	0
Starbase Dockings:	0
Level:	Cadet
Shields:	Automatic
Score:	0

Ok

Save Game

This function saves a current game to disk.   A standard MS-Windows file save dialog is used to enter the path and filename for saving.   The default file extension for Stellar Explorer v2.0 game files is .ST2.

You may not save a game if you are currently in a red alert state.

Load Game

This function loads a previously saved game.   A standard MS-Windows file open dialog is used to select a file to load.   The default file extension for Stellar Explorer v2.0 game files is .ST2.

Stellar Explorer

© 1992, 1993 by Technological Computer Innovations Corporation

Game Design / Programmer: Don Metzler
QC / Marketing: Doug Walgren

Creative Consulting / Play Testing:
Kevin Reinsch, Mark Lansdown, Gumby the Salamander, Jack the Frog

v1.0 Supporters:
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