

SimPark Readme

NOTE: Some of the features mentioned in this file are not available in the demonstration version.

This file contains all the last minute information we weren't able to put in the instruction manual or Quick Start Guide. To make it easier to read, this file is divided in to three parts.

- I. Common Gameplay Questions and Answers
- II. Common Technical Questions and Answers
- III. Maxis Maxims (information on refunds, our current mailing address, etc.)

I - Common Gameplay Questions and Answers

While I was playing, I heard an evil sounding laugh and a strange green plant appeared in several places. What happened?

Uh oh! You were just a victim of the "kudzu disaster". Kudzu is a plant that gradually spreads as much as it can in any direction and is very hard to get rid of once it has started. We recommend stopping the kudzu as fast as possible so it doesn't spread and take over your park.

The birds keep flying off the bottom of my park.

Birds like to fly around and sometimes appear to leave your park. That's normal. If a bird leaves the screen at the bottom of the screen, it should appear again at the top of the park and continue flying happily around your park.

If the bird never comes back, you may want to interview some of the other birds and ask about their living conditions. It's possible that bird wasn't happy for some reason and decided to leave the park. If this happens, Rizzo may have some words of advice for you on how you can make your park more pleasant for birds.

Sometimes when I use the Microphone tool to interview a creature, Rizzo tells me what kind of animal it is but doesn't report on it's status.

This is normal. If Rizzo only tells you the name of the creature you're interested in, it means that the creature is fine and you don't have to worry about it dying, or getting eaten at this point in time. However, you may want to check back on it later in the game.

When I try to interview the fish, nothing happens.

This is a limitation of the program. The bad news is you can't interview the fish to see how they're doing. The good news is that you never have to worry about stocking the water with fish. This is all taken care of for you by the program automatically.

When some of the larger animals turn around, their heads' disappear briefly and then reappear again when it's done turning.

This is a function of the game. In order to make the game as fast and enjoyable as possible, we created a render-engine that controls all the animal animations in the game and optimized it to run as fast as possible. Unfortunately, a side-effect of this part of the game being so fast, is that some animals get "chopped" off when they turn around. The good thing is this doesn't affect any creature's happiness in your park, it just looks a little funny sometimes.

If I put a lot of large animals near each other, some start to die even if there isn't anything around that is a predator.

What's happening here is called "population crowding". Some large animals are very territorial and don't like it if there are lots of other large animals near it. For example, if too many black bears are next to each other, some of them will become unhappy. To prevent this, we suggest not placing too many of the same type of large animal next to each other in the park. Try spreading them out a bit and the animals will naturally try to stay far enough away to keep each

other happy.

OTHER LAST MINUTE NOTES ON GAMEPLAY

If you query on a plant and instead of Rizzo interviewing it, you hear an evil laughter, that's a good way to tell that it's kudzu. This is one of the disasters and you'll want to solve it as fast as possible to keep your park in top condition. See above for more information on kudzu.

The "microphone" tool will allow you to interview almost anything in your park to find out it's well-being. The only things you can't interview are disasters (such as fire, kudzu, and the garbage dump) and items meant for people (i.e. the gazebo, hot dog stand, etc). People themselves can be interviewed as well except when they're using an item in the park such as riding the slide or sitting on a bench. The people are busy then and don't want to be bothered. When the person you're interested in is finished and walking around, you can try to interview him/her again.

Try planting trees at least 3 tiles apart from each other. While some may be fine, other trees don't get enough sunlight if they're too close together and won't grow as well.

There is no pizza stand. The kid that keeps asking for a pizza stand just doesn't like hot dogs very much.

The tutorial can be launched from the Maxis program group or directly from the game. If you are having any trouble launching it from the game, exit the game and launch it from the program group. This should eliminate all problems.

In the Quickstart Guide, it states that the levels begin at Skink and move through Chipmunk, Duck, Owl, Wolf and Elk. Your first promotion takes you directly to Duck level thereby eliminating Chipmunk level. Congratulations.

II - Common Technical Questions and Answers

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMPUTER

Several of the problems you may encounter while using SimPark might be related to a setting in the computer. Below are common questions that the Technical Support department will ask you should you need to contact them for assistance. It is very helpful (and will make the phone call shorter, thus saving you money) if you know this information ahead of time. You may also figure out what is causing the problem while gathering this information and be able to play your game without even waiting for Technical Support to be able to help you.

WHAT OPERATING SYSTEM ARE YOU RUNNING THE GAME IN?

If you had to type something in to get the game to run at a C:\> prompt, you're probably running DOS. If your screen has a Start button in one of the corners, you're running Windows 95. If you press <Ctrl> and <ESC> at the same time and a box called "Task List" appears, you're running Windows 3.1.

WHAT DOS VERSION ARE YOU RUNNING?

First, get to a DOS prompt (they usually look like this: C:\>) and type in VER <enter>. A line should appear that tells you your DOS version. Write this information down as it is very helpful.

HOW MUCH MEMORY (RAM) DO YOU HAVE?

If you're running DOS 6.0 or higher, go to a DOS prompt (see above) and type in MEM <enter>. A chart with a bunch of numbers will appear. The number you want is on the left, next to the words "Total Memory" about half way down the screen.

WHAT TYPE/BRAND OF VIDEO CARD DO YOU HAVE?

Sometimes this is a tough one to find out. The only foolproof way is to ask the sales person when you buy your computer.

If you're running Windows 3.1, try this: Double click on "Windows Setup" (usually in the main group). The line next to the word "Display" will say something that may be the type of video card you have. It may also have some funny numbers or other information there instead. You might wish to write that information down anyway as it is helpful as well.

If you're running Windows95, try these steps: Click on the Start button, select "Settings" and then "Control Panel". Double click on "Display" and click on the "Settings" tab. Click on "Change Display Type" and write down the information in the box called "Adapter Type" at the top. (To exit this box, click "Cancel" to make sure you don't accidentally click something. The buttons in this box can cause problems if they are set incorrectly.)

WHAT TYPE/BRAND OF SOUND CARD DO YOU HAVE?

The only sure way to know is to ask the sales representative when you purchase the computer.

ARE YOU *SURE* IT'S A SOUND BLASTER 16 AND NOT A CLONE CARD?

It is possible to tell the difference in a Creative Labs Sound Blaster 16 card and a card that just "thinks" it's a Sound Blaster 16 and there are differences in the two. First, go to a DOS prompt and type in "SET" <enter>. Several lines worth of information will appear. If your card is a true Creative Labs Sound Blaster 16, you'll see these two lines appear:

```
SOUND=C:\SB16
```

```
BLASTER=A220 1x Dx ....and maybe some other information here.
```

If you have only one or neither of these lines, the sound card is either not an actual Creative Labs Sound Blaster 16 or it is set up incorrectly.

HOW BIG IS YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Once again, from a DOS prompt, type in CHKDSK <enter>. Your hard drive will spin and a list of several numbers will appear. One of them should have the words "Total disk space" next to it. That is the size of your hard drive.

HOW MUCH FREE HARD DRIVE SPACE DO YOU HAVE?

If you're running DOS 6.0 or newer (see above to learn what version you're running) go to a DOS prompt and type in DIR <enter>. Some information will fly up the screen and at the very bottom it should say "bytes free" and have a number next to it. That is your amount of available hard drive space.

PRINTING

Your printer's settings can effect the quality of printing. Ink saving settings may cause the printed park to look washed out. Black and white printers with selectable dithering modes may print out pages that are too dark if fine mode or error diffusion dithering are chosen. For the printers we tested, coarse dithering was the best choice. You can experiment with your printer's settings by (Windows95) choosing "Settings: Printers" from the "Start" button. Click once on your printer to select it and choose "Properties" from the "File" menu. If available, dither settings can be found under the "Graphics" tab of this tabbed property sheet.

Printing may slow down your system while the print spooler converts the data and sends it to your printer. Each page of the park is a very large image containing lots of data, especially at high print resolutions. Adjusting the "Spool Settings" from the "Details" tab of the printer's tabbed property sheet may improve performance somewhat, reducing the print resolution should improve it further.

If you're running Windows 3.1, you can try the above steps by using the "Printers" item in your

Control Panel. Double click on "Control Panel" (usually found in the "Main" group) and select "Printers".

SimPark also does not support 600 dpi printing. We recommend printing in 300dpi for optimum performance although you should be able to print in any of the following resolutions if your printer and driver support them: 100, 180, 200, 300, 360, and 400.

While playing the game, I get the following error:
"EMM386 has detected error #06"

The error messages that is occurring while you use the program can be caused by conflicts between the program and your sound card drivers for Windows. There are three possible courses of action that may fix the problem.

The first thing to try is to change the memory buffer for your sound card to 6 seconds from whatever it is currently set for. To do this, open your Control Panel icon (usually in the MAIN group), and select the control panel for Drivers. Find the driver for [MCI]Sound. Click on it once, then click on the Setup button. Although the default memory buffer is 4 seconds, you should change it to 6 seconds. Now, choose OK, then Close, then close the control panels and try running the program.

If this solution does not work for you, you may be experiencing driver problems with your sound card. For the time being, you will want to disable sound and music in the program.

NOTE FOR DEMO: If you are running the program from a CD, you'll have to copy the PARKDEMO.INI file from the CD to your C:\WINDOWS directory in order to make changes to it.

To do this, in the Program Manager, select File, and Run..., and in the Command Line, type "NOTEPAD C:\WINDOWS\PARKDEMO.INI" then click OK. This will bring up the settings file for SimPark for Windows. You should see the following in the **[options]**:

```
NoSound=0  
NoBackgroundMusic=0
```

Change both lines so that it reads:

```
NoSound=1  
NoBackgroundMusic=1
```

When you are done, select File, then Save, then File, and Exit. This will turn off sound and music within the program for all new parks.

You will now be able to run the program, but without sound or music. As a long term solution, contact the manufacturer of your computer or of your sound card, and ask them to send you updated Windows drivers for your sound card. Once you have installed updated drivers, you can turn Sound and Music back on inside the program.

When trying to start the game, I get the message: "This program cannot be run in DOS mode".

There are two possible solutions to this problem._

If you're running Windows 95, you need to restart your computer (usually by typing "win" at the DOS prompt) and run the game via the icon in your Start menu that was created during installation.

If you're running Windows 3.1, this message is caused by a problem that occurred during the installation of Win32s and we'll need to reinstall it. First exit any programs that are running and

go to your Windows Program Manager. Insert your SimPark CD in the CD drive. Click on the File menu and select Run. In the box next to the words "Command Line" type this in:

D:\SETUP\WIN32S\DISK1\SETUP

and click OK. If your CD ROM drive is a different letter than D, use that letter instead. Your CD will spin a bit and you may be prompted to answer a couple of questions. Just click OK and follow the on-screen instructions. When Win32s is done installing, your computer will need to be restarted. Once you restart, SimPark should now run properly.

OTHER LAST MINUTE NOTES ON TECHNICAL ISSUES

We noticed a problem with trying to start the tutorial from the main menu in the game (this is the screen with four rocks, each one providing a different option - start new park, load a saved park, tutorial, and exit) on laptop computers with Chips & Technologies video chipsets running Windows95. In some cases, when you click on tutorial, it will begin to launch, but the screen turns entirely black. We've determined this is a compatibility problem with either this particular piece of hardware or the drivers for Chips & Technologies equipment. To solve the problem, you can launch the tutorial with the RIZZTUT.EXE file instead of within the game. Or, if you must launch it from within the program for some reason, when the screen turns black, press <ALT> <F4>. A dialog box will appear asking if you wish to quit. Click on "YES" and the screen should go back to normal.

III - Maxis Maxims

The Maxis Guarantee

We want you to be happy. We do our best to make software that is both fun and trouble-free, but if there is a problem, let us know. If you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, for any reason, you should first consult the return or exchange policy at the place of purchase. If all else fails, you may exchange it for a different Maxis catalog product of equal or lesser value. Just send back the program to the address below, with your dated sales receipt within 30 days of purchase and a check or money order for \$5 to cover return freight, and specify your choice of product for exchange. If the exchange order amount is higher than your return credit please include the additional payment. Dealers and distributors are not eligible.

Disk Warranty

Maxis provides a 30-day limited warranty on all recording media (beyond 30 days, include \$5 to cover shipping and handling costs). For disk replacement, send your disks to:

Maxis Customer Service
2121 North California Blvd. #600
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-3572
Attn.: Disk Warranty Replacement

Maxis Customer Service

For the location of your nearest software retailer, exchange information, software updates, warranty disk replacement, catalog orders, direct order status, shipping information or general stuff contact Maxis Customer Service at 510-927-3900, M-F 8:00am-5:00pm (Pacific Time), or by Fax at (510) 927-3581, or by mail at:

Maxis Customer Service
2121 North California Blvd. #600
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-3572
Attn.: Customer Service

Maxis Technical Support

For technical questions dealing with hardware and software compatibility, startup problems, system errors, and other unexplained phenomena, refer to section II of this README document or Quick Start Guide. If the problem persists, follow these directions before contacting technical support:

- 1.) Gather all information that applies to the problem. Note or print out any onscreen error messages you get when the problem occurs.
- 2.) Write down all of the steps that you have taken to correct the problem.
- 3.) Be sure to know your hardware configuration, operating system version etc.
- 4.) When you call, please be in front of your computer with the power on. Have your manual, product disks and registration number available and contact Maxis Technical Support by calling (510) 927-3905 (M-F 8:00am-6:00pm Pacific Time), or by Fax at (510) 927-3581 or by mail at:

Maxis Customer Service
2121 North California Blvd. #600
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-3572
Attn.: Technical Support

24-Hour Technical Support!

Technical Support is now available 24-hours-a-day, seven days-a-week with the use of a touch-tone-telephone via our automated support line. Our automated system is designed to provide answers to a majority of support questions. We also provide a fax-on-demand system with detailed step-by-step instructions for a majority of technical support issues. Both are available at (510) 927-3905, 24-hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. Our 24-hour response system will answer a majority of questions with a few responses on your touch-tone telephone in the evenings and on weekends, letting you play with your Software Toy, on Saturday morning when you really should be mowing the lawn.

The Maxis Bulletin Board Service (BBS)

Modem users can take advantage of our free BBS via modem at (510) 927-3910. It provides on-line access to the latest software demos, updates, extra files, swap-able files, and the Technical Support message base. There is no charge for Maxis BBS usage, and full user access is granted upon completion of a brief questionnaire. We run at 28.8k and all lower baud rates and require a setting of 8 data bits, no parity, and 1 stop bit (8-N-1).

Technical Support Is Available On-Line on the Following Subscription Services:

America Online: Keyword "Maxis"; E-mail "Maxis". AOL can be obtained by calling 1-800-827-6364 and asking for a FREE introductory sign-on kit. Five hours of free time are provided with the first month.

CompuServe: Go "gambpub" and select "Maxis" (section 8); CompuServe can be obtained by calling 800-524-3388 and asking operator #420 to receive a free introductory membership, \$15.00 usage credit, and a month's worth of basic service FREE.

Internet: We provide the following support services via Internet:

World Wide Web: www.maxis.com - Access the latest demos, patches, & support information.

File Transfer Protocol: ftp.maxis.com - Download the latest updates, demos, and Technical FAQs.

E-mail: support@maxis.com - Talk to a trained support professional.

If you have any further questions that this document didn't address, feel free to contact

Maxis at the phone numbers or address listed above. Thanks again and have fun!

Sincerely,

Maxis Customer Service