

About the Book & DPVB Link

Direct Conflict! 1.0 was written with Visual Basic 4.0 (32-bit) for the new book "Visual Basic 4 Network Gaming Adventure Set", which was published by the Coriolis Group in the Winter quarter of '95. The book includes and covers the Direct Conflict! 1.0 source code and also includes the DirectPlay DPVB Link DLL file, which is used by the game for network communication...

Visual Basic 4.0 Power!

"Visual Basic 4.0 Network Gaming Adventure Set" is the first book on the market to focus on creating windows multi-user games using the powerful new version of Visual Basic 4.0. If you are a programmer, and are interested in creating games like Direct Conflict! (or any other types of multi-user games), pick up a copy of the book! It also includes cool tools and software from well-known companies. Listed below is some of the software that comes with the book:

DPVB Link (Perspective Systems)

The first Visual Basic 4 DirectPlay interface DLL!

AppLink 1.1 (Synergy Software Technologies inc.)

A well-known network communication custom control that's both powerful and easy to use.

Install Shield Express (Stirling Software)

One of the final BETA versions of Install Shield Express. This program is excellent for creating customized install and uninstall programs for your Visual Basic 4.0 (16 AND 32-bit) final products!

Fractal Painter 3.1 DEMO (Fractal Design Corporation)

THE (in my opinion) best paint program on the market!

Sound Forge 3.1 DEMO (Sonic Foundry)

An excellent program for creating digital sound FX for your games!

ForeHelp 2.11 DEMO (ForeFront, Inc.)

As my choice of help authoring tools, ForeHelp allows you to quickly and easily create on-line help for your applications. It created this help file!

MORDOR 1.1 Shareware (MakeltSo Software)

A large-scale fantasy role-playing game that was written in Visual Basic 3.0. Guaranteed to keep any FRPer busy!

...And much, much more!

Who could pass up so much computer candy? Nobody! But wait! Why stop there? If you're interested, keep reading about the main DirectPlay feature of the book, DPVB

Link!

Overview of DPVB Link

The network communication guts behind Direct Conflict! is DPVB Link. Keep on reading to learn more about getting your hands on it to create your own custom applications!

What is DPVB Link?

DPVB Link gives you, the Visual Basic programmer, access to DirectPlay, Microsoft's powerful new API library that makes writing multi-player games easier than ever before. DirectPlay allows you to create applications that can communicate with each other over networks, phone lines, or the Internet with the same exact code. And you don't have to know anything about low-level communication protocols to use it!

Why do I need DPVB Link to use DirectPlay?

Unfortunately, VB programmers cannot easily use DirectPlay or the other DirectX libraries that are part of Microsoft's Game SDK. This is because these APIs depend on the use of COM objects, which VB programs cannot directly access, and callbacks, which VB cannot implement. DPVB Link includes a dynamic-link library (DLL) that allows you to bypass these VB limitations. You simply call functions in DPVBLINK.DLL in place of direct calls to the DirectPlay DLL.

What's included?

DirectConflict uses the DLL from the unregistered version of DPVB Link that comes with Coriolis' Visual Basic 4 Network Gaming Adventure Set, by David Allen. In the package that comes with this book, you'll find the unregistered version of DPVBLINK.DLL and a Visual Basic project called DPVBTEST, which you can use to learn about DirectPlay and the functions that are available in the DLL. The source code for DPVBTEST is also included, so that you can see what's happening below the surface.

Though you may use this version of DPVB Link to experiment with and learn about DirectPlay, you may not include any part of the package in your own commercial applications. You must purchase the registered version of the product in order to be granted this right. Please see the file LICENSE.TXT in this directory for the details of the DPVB Link Unregistered Version software license agreement. Purchasing the registered version of DPVB Link grants you the license to incorporate DPVBLINK.DLL into commercial applications for distribution free of any royalties.

Are there other benefits to buying the registered version?

Certain DirectPlay functions, most notably the "group" functions, are not included in the unregistered version of DPVB Link; DPVBTEST demonstrates those functions that are available. The registered version contains all DirectPlay functions. In addition, you'll receive technical support and an enhanced DPVBTEST

project that lets you test out these extra functions, and includes context-sensitive help about DirectPlay.

Being a registered owner will also get you a discount on future versions of DPVB Link. (We're planning an OCX version that will extend DirectPlay functionality even further if there is a good response to the current version. Let us know about features you'd like to see included!)

How do I obtain the registered version of DPVB Link?

The registered version of DPVB Link is available for \$149. (Plus \$5 for U.S. shipping, \$10 for shipping to Canada / Mexico, and \$25 for shipping to all other countries.)

Purchasing this version grants you the right to use it in your own commercial applications, royalty-free. Ordering DPVB Link is easy; just call the Coriolis Group at: (800) 410-0192 or (602) 483-0192

You can also fax in orders at:
(602) 483-0193

Finally, you can send in an order by email on the Internet. Email your order to the following address, but be sure to include your method of payment, full name, and shipping address:

email orders: orders@coriolis.com

You can purchase DPVB Link by credit card or by sending in a check.

Where can I get more information?

Check out David Allen's Visual Basic 4 Network Gaming Adventure Set, published by the Coriolis Group!

Chapter 10 of this book describes DirectPlay in detail, and shows you how to use DPVBLINK.DLL to access DirectPlay from Visual Basic. Chapters 11, 12, and 17 are about games that use DPVB Link and DirectPlay for communications -- you can refer to these for a demonstration of DPVB Link in action! If you'd like more information, you can contact us, Adam and Mike Weissman at Perspective Systems, via email at:

71612.3151@compuserve.com

All In All...

If your mouth is watering, you definately need to buy the book (which you should be able to find at your local bookstore)!

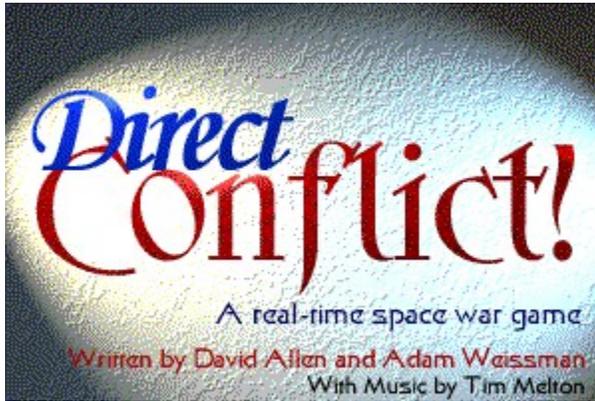
For more information, you can contact the Coriolis Group by calling them, or accessing

the Coriolis Web site at the following address: <http://www.coriolis.com>.

Thank you for playing, and let the games begin!

David Allen

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Welcome to the Direct Conflict! 1.0 Help File!

(Last Edited 11/7/95)

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Direct Conflict! 1.0 was written in Visual Basic 4.0 by David Allen and Adam Weissman for the book "Visual Basic 4 Network Gaming Adventure Set", which is published by the Coriolis Group. To learn more about writing multi-user games with Visual Basic 4.0, and to get your hands on the Direct Conflict! source code, buy the book! You can also access the Coriolis Groups web site at <http://www.coriolis.com>!

Hints & Tips

Hint

Don't get hit by torpedos!

Tip

Are you a Ge'tal? Is somebody bothering you? Why not RAM THEM and see what happens?!

Hint

Are you a Bormu? Don't let ANYBODY ram you!

Tip

He who flees and runs away, lives to fight another day!

Hint

Mock those who are attacking and are better at the game than you - you may be able to kill them when they're busy trying to insult you back (Bormu are good at this)!

Having Troubleshooting problems?

How to Play

Playing Direct Conflict! is pretty simple. When the game starts, enter your name, select the empire you wish to represent, and press the Start Game button.

Once the game has started, you will be in a corner of the system, depending on which empire you're representing. Keep in mind that other ships that are part of your empire can destroy you just as easily as other empire ships, so keep your eyes open!

Flying Around

You can maneuver your ship by moving the mouse cursor within the map and pressing the left mouse button (you can also hold down the left mouse button to continue changing course). To stop your ship, click on the ship. Your ship will only move at one speed when in motion, so you don't have to worry about speeding up and slowing down.

Firing Torpedos

To fire a torpedo, have the mouse cursor over (or in the direction) of your target and press the right mouse button. You can fire as many torpedos as you like as long as your ships heat isn't too high. If it is, you will not be able to fire.

Damage

If you are hit and damaged, your ship will automatically repair itself over time (the amount of time depends on the type of ship and the extent of the damage).

Other Stuff

You can also send messages to all players, certain empires, or specific players.

You can also turn off the Music, Sound FX, the small system map, and the Player Names. On slower systems, turning off the last two may increase performance.

The Distress Call button will send a message to every player who is a member of your empire and inform them that you're in trouble.

If you wish to self destruct or leave the game, simply press the appropriate button. Be careful when pressing those buttons, though - there's no confirmation!

Interested in [Hints & Tips?](#)

Introduction

Direct Conflict! is a real-time multi-player space war game where each player has the choice of representing one of four empires in a large combat field where other players meet to destroy each other! Depending on what empire the player chooses, the ship will be able to move faster, or slow, take more damage, or less, fire more powerful torpedos, or less, etc. The goal of the game is to fly around with your friends, shoot each other, collect a good score, send messages, and have fun!

Direct Conflict! uses DirectPlay for communication by either using IPX or TCP protocols, or establishing a modem connection.

Want to learn more about the [Empires?](#)

The Empires

There are four basic Empires in Direct Conflict! Each one has its own unique ship type with different abilities.

The Federation

The Federation ships are general starships that have normal weapons and armor. They move at a pretty good speed and are good at fighting. More or less, the Federation ships are evenly matched with Kingari ships when it comes to combat.

The Kingari

Longing for war, the Kingari tend to shoot at most any type of empire ship. Evenly matched with the Federation, the Kingari have a particular hate for the Bormu, who tend to run circles around them!

The Bormu

Fast and small. The Bormu are a trading race that are aggravating to everybody around because their ships move so fast. They can also fire more torpedos before their weapons overheat. The main drawback is that the Bormu can't take near the damage that the Federation and Kingari ships can, which means they're easy to destroy - if you can hit them. Their torpedos also don't do as much damage, but if you're hit by a bunch of them, look out!

The Ge'Tal

The big, fat and mean boys in the system. The Ge'tal are very arrogant and don't like any of the other empires. They have the most powerful ships in the game, but are snails when it comes to moving. They can take more damage than any other ship and have the most powerful torpedos in the game, but a fast-moving Bormu can really mess them up.

Want to learn [How to Play](#) the game?

Troubleshooting

Problem

The game tells me it can't find a service provider!

Solution

Are you >100%< sure you have IPX or TCP installed on your system and bound with the network adapter?

Problem

I can't seem to log into an active game - it creates my own!

Solution

When the user who started the DirectPlay session leaves the game, new players cannot be created in the session anymore. This means all of the players would need to leave and start a new game in order to allow others to join. It's a good idea (for large games) to have a machine that just sits there and acts as a server if you don't want to ever worry about this. Sorry, it's a DirectPlay feature!

Problem

The game runs too slow! I knew that Visual Basic couldn't do this!

Solution

I wrote this game on a P90 system and tested it on Win95 486/66 systems. If you have a slower machine, you might want to turn off the system map and ship names options to cut down on the graphics handling of the program. Now may also be an excellent time to upgrade that system!

Want to know more about the cool Book that the game was written for? Of course you do!

