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Mission: THUNDERBOLT™ v.1.0

Mission: written by Dave Scheifler and published by Casady & Greene, Inc. is an Ultima type of exploration/adventure style game. With a science fiction theme, Mission: THUNDERBOLT portrays you as the last member of a crack commando team to infiltrate and retrieve a secret weapon from the depths of an abandoned underground Research and Development complex. There are numerous high tech weaponry and equipment to be found among the mazes. Half the fun is finding out what each item does, (the library is a great place to research).

Movement is via the keyboard or the mouse. Using the mouse employs "Path analysis". Path analysis is something that all "Ultima" maze style games should include. Ingenious and time saving, path analysis occurs when you click on a previously explored location some distance from your character. Path analysis occurs after each step to take advantage of topology changes as they occur. Known traps, pits, closed doors, and creatures are avoided and a detour is taken. If the pathway to the north is suddenly blocked, your character will double back and take another way around. It is very smart and saves much play time that would ordinarily be wasted. In a game as expansive as this, every second counts.

Combat will occur frequently throughout the game (although hacking and slashing anything that moves is not always the best method for solving the game). If hand to hand, just about any thing may be wielded and/or thrown as a weapon. There are numerous weapons that fire also, along with traps that may be set and grenades to be thrown.

One very nice thing about this game is the versatility. Play may be solely from the mouse, there is not an action or command that cannot be issued from the numerous menus and windows. On the other hand, every command/action has a short cut keystroke combination. There are at least 50 different commands listed in the manual. There are a variety of solutions to a problem. If you are stuck in a corner you may dig a hole in walls, floor or ceiling. You may make allies with anything to help your mission. Another nice feature   is how identical items are grouped and quantified. This helps to decrease scrolling time for that certain item (there are a lot of them). I found it annoying that grenades, on the other hand, were

not grouped. The graphics are superb and the sounds are humorous if not out right obnoxious at times.

My friend enjoyed the fact that the game was so comprehensive. At times it was too realistic. Recharging your shotgun is tedious and should be automatic. Clicking a recharge button for each gyrojet adds up to be very wearisome. Also, being trapped by a stupid mechanical robot in a corner is no fun, because you are too weak to shove it out of a corner. It almost calls for a Mission: THUNDERBOLT editor/cheater to increase the attribute of strength for these frustrating times. Actually in general your character is too weak to play the game adequetely. I wish that a collective number was generated and you distribute the numbers as you see fit for each attribute. Also the game is huge. A real drawback. It calls for at least 6 megabytes of clear disk space. If you like to save your game frequently, I hope you have a large hard drive because each save consumes up to 1.5 megabytes for each seaparate save. They enlarge as the game progresses. This game consists of many cool sounds and graphics. The playability is excellent and as I stated before and the graphics and sound impressive. The manual is complete if not wordy. It could follow the Law of Occam's Razor, "The simplest and briefest explanation is best". The password, in the form of a security access authorization code chart, is prompted at the first level up and at the beginning of each resumed game. We also noticed that annoyingly it also asks for a password at several other random periods throughout the game. I do not see the point of this and is a significant drawback.

This is an exemplary action/ adventure game. Although there are no challenging tasks to solve beyond avoiding or conquering a variety of monsters; finding the purpose of items and the friendly interface makes this game a pioneer. Hopefully, it will set a standard that other authors will follow and build upon for these type of games.

Mission: THUNDERBOLT™
System Requirements
MacPlus or better
System 6.0.? or better(I used 6.0.5 and 7.0.1)
Hard Drive with 6 MB clear space required
1,4,8-bit color supported
Memory: 1.1 MB default. 8-bit requires 1.3 MB

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