

Concentroids From Planet X

Release Version 1.0

Information & Instructions

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1. Credits and Contacts

CONCENTROIDS FROM PLANET X ©1993 BY HIEP DAM. Concentroids is shareware, and as such you may try it out on a trial basis for a reasonable amount of time. If you like it, please register yourself by sending the shareware fee of \$5.00. For more distribution information, see part a. Shareware Fees.

Concentroids was pretty much a one-person effort. I started programming Concentroids at the beginning of March 1993, during my spring break. It's now July. However, I would like to thank the following people for their help:

Dave Dam Input and concepts
Phat Ho Ideas and playtesting
Tuan Hoang Ideas and playtesting

I would appreciate any comments, suggestions, bug reports, and criticisms from any and all, whether you're a registered user or not. To contact me:

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2. Concentroids Requirements

The basic requirements: 4 MB RAM and System 7.0 or later (sorry System 6.0.x users!). Concentroids will run in black and white, 16 colors/grays, or 256 colors. Memory requirements depend on the amount of colors you intend to play Concentroids with:

- Black and white: Minimum is 900K
- 16 colors: Minimum is 1200K, preferred is 1400K
- 256 colors: Minimum is 1400K, preferred is 1600K

The minimum guidelines are for Macs with tight memory situations. If you have enough memory to spare, I suggest you keep the amount of memory to at least 1400K, no matter how many colors you intend to play Concentroids with.

A. Shareware Fees

Concentroids From Planet X, version 1.0, is shareware. Try it out, and if you and/or your children like it, please **register**. You can register by sending the shareware fee of \$5.00 to the above address.

You may distribute Concentroids freely as long as all associated documents are included with Concentroids, and neither the documents nor the program are distributed in any modified form (you may distribute Concentroids with changed settings or high scores, however).

The benefits of registering? It gives me great motivation for creating more entertainment software, and I will notify all registered users of any updates and new goodies coming from 3G Software. Because Concentroids is so large, I know most of you probably spent some time, effort, and money in obtaining a copy (either by mail order, downloading fees, etc.). This is, of course, very conducive to not registering. I understand—but please consider how much time and effort it takes into creating a large project such as Concentroids. Think about it and register. Thanks.

B. General Information

Concentroids From Planet X, as you may have found out by now, is based on the Concentration category of games. So what makes Concentroids different from the rest? Here's a brief feature list: scoring, high scores, nice graphics (tiles and backgrounds), animation, funky sounds, a background soundtrack, wildcard matching, and a time limit.

C. Menus

Here is a listing of all the menu items in Concentroids, plus some explanations for the non-obvious items...

File Menu:

Begin Game B

Pause Game P/Resume Game R

Abort Game E

Save Settings

Default Settings

This resets the game to default settings. Note that choosing this just changes the settings—it doesn't save anything. Default are: music off and sound on, 7x6 dimensions, fastest animation, wildcard matching enabled, draw numbers disabled, and number color black.

Show High Scores H

Clear High Scores...

Quit Q

Sounds Menu:

Play Music M

Play Sounds S

A note on the Play Music and Play Sounds menu items. They behave differently on different Macintoshes. On Macs with the Apple Sound Chip (ASC), you will be able to hear **both** the background soundtrack and sounds (yeah!). Thus you can toggle on and off the music and sound independently of each other. However, on Macs without the ASC (Mac SE's, PowerBook 100s, etc.), you can only hear **either** the background soundtrack or the sounds, not both.

Not sure whether your Macintosh has an ASC? Don't worry, Concentroids will automatically determine what sound options you're able to choose.

Volume 0 to 7

You can change the volume at any time, including during gameplay.

Dimensions Menu:

To be able to enter your name in the high scores, you must set the Dimensions to 7x6.

4 x 4 to 7 x 6 D

Other...

You may customize the number of rows and columns in Concentroids. There are three restrictions, however. 1) The number of columns must be 7 or less; 2) The number of rows must be 6 or less; and 3) The number of columns x rows must be an even number and less or equal to 42. Forty-two is the maximum number of tiles you can set in the game.

Options Menu:

Normal Mode/Kiddie Mode

Sorry, but only Normal Mode is supported in this version of Concentroids. Future versions will implement Kiddie Mode. Kiddie Mode will be basically for young children—there's no scoring, no time limit, no wildcard matching, etc. in Kiddie Mode.

Fastest Animation to Slowest Animation/Other Animation... O

Different Macintoshes have different processors. Because Concentroids animation is a function of processor power, you may find Concentroids animation too fast (especially if you're playing in black and white). You may have to fine-tune the delay rate a bit to get the smoothest animation for your specific Macintosh. If you find animation too slow even at the fastest animation setting, try reading the **Performance issues** section of this read-me.

FYI, Fastest Animation corresponds to a 0 tick delay between each frame of animation, Slower Animation is a 1 tick delay, and Slowest Animation is a 2 ticks delay. 1 tick is one-sixtieth of a second.

Disable Wildcard Matching W

There are no benefits nor penalties in scoring for turning on or turning off wildcard matching.

Display Numbers N

If you turn off Display Numbers, Concentroids will obviously be a little bit harder. Knowing this, Concentroids will bestow you with some token points at the end of each stage for choosing this harder route.

Number Colors

This menu item is enabled only if you have a color Macintosh. If you turn on Display Numbers, you can choose what color to display them in. If the available colors don't satisfy you, choose the Other... to choose a custom color. Remember to choose Save Settings to keep your custom color.

D. Gameplay

The premise of the game is quite simple. It's very similar to the other "Concentration" type of games you've played with before. There are a certain number of tiles on the screen, and the purpose is to match pairs of Concentroids hidden beneath each tile. There are some additional "extras" however, that gives the game a little spice:

- **Scoring.** Scoring is implemented in Concentroids, as well as High Scores. If you miss, you will be penalized -50 points, so you will start out with negative scores for a short while. Don't fret—a single match will give you 500 points.
- **Spheres (Lives).** You cannot continue playing Concentroids indefinitely (unlike normal Concentration games, Gunshy games, etc.) You start out with 3 lives. Since you begin play with your current life, only two lives are shown. You lose a life by running out of time. You can get extra lives only by wildcard matches.
- **Time Limit.** You must match all pairs of Concentroids within the given time limit. If you fail to do so, you will lose one sphere (life), the remaining tiles will be reshuffled, the timer will be reset, and you will not receive any time bonuses at the end of the stage. In addition, you will be penalized 10,000 points. You cannot turn off the time limit in this version of Concentroids (sorry).
- **Wildcard matching.** If you select a wildcard **first** and then another Concentroid, the wildcard will automatically locate the matching Concentroid for you. In addition, there are some special Concentroids that, if you match them via a wildcard, will bestow you with an extra life, extra time, or a hefty score bonus (see section E. Wildcards, for more info).

- **Consecutive matches.** If you match two or more pairs in a row, you will receive some bonus points. The more consecutive matches you have, the larger the bonus.

- **Statistics.** During play, Concentroids will keep track of some statistics for you:

PMatched: This is the number of pairs you have matched in this stage.

PLeft: This is the number of pairs left you have to match.

Misses: This is the number of misses you've made in this stage. The high scores will display your total cumulative number of misses.

Consecs: The number of consecutive matches made. Note that consecutives may carry over to the next stage, if you happen to match a pair out of pure luck. The high scores will display your longest run of consecutive matches.

E. Wildcards

There are always two wildcards present in each stage, no matter how many rows and columns you have in the game. If you match a wildcard with a normal Concentroid, the wildcard will automatically match the other Concentroid for you. You will not receive any extra points other than that given in a regular pair match.

If you match a wildcard with another wildcard, you will receive a 10,000 point bonus, on top of the score you get for a regular match.

If you match a wildcard with a **Timer Concentroid**, you will receive some extra time. Save this Concentroid for later stages, when you will be given less time.

If you match a wildcard with a **Sphere Concentroid**, you will receive an extra sphere (life). This is another valuable Concentroid (This is known as an "one-up" in video game parlance).

If you match a wildcard with a **Bonus Concentroid (Mother Lode)**, you will receive a 100,000 point bonus. If you're the greedy type of player, this Concentroid's for you.



Wildcard



Sphere
Concentroid



Timer
Concentroid



Bonus
Concentroid
(Mother Lode)

F. Scoring

<u>Type</u>	<u>Points</u>
Basic Match	500
Miss (No Match)	-50
1st consecutive match	Basic Match + 1,500
2nd consecutive	Basic + 3,000
3rd consecutive	Basic + 6,000
4th consecutive	Basic + 12,000
5th consecutive	Basic + 24,000
6th consecutive and on	Basic + 48,000
Basic wildcard match (i.e. with a normal Concentroid)	Basic Match
Wildcard + Wildcard	Basic + 10,000
Wildcard + Sphere	Basic + 1,000
Wildcard + Mother Lode (i.e. Bonus Concentroid)	Basic + 100,000
Wildcard + Timer	Basic + 1,000
End of Stage Bonus	10,000
No "Draw Numbers"	4,000 per stage
Exceeding Time Limit	-10,000 + no End of Stage Bonus
Time Remaining Bonus	1,000 per time block

G. Performance issues

Concentroids was tested on a PowerBook 100, SE/30, IIsi, and IIfx. I am not sure of the speed on Mac LCs and LC IIs. Concentroids has not been tested on a Mac Plus or SE, but I'm pretty sure it will indeed run (given at least 4 MB of RAM and System 7).

1. 256 color and speed: If you are using a slower color Macintosh (especially ones without a video card) such as LC, LC II, IIsi, etc. then Concentroids might run too slow in 256 colors, even at the Fastest Animation setting. My only current solution at this time is to tell you to try Concentroids in 16 colors. Concentroids will run much faster. However, at 16 colors (not grays, mind you), the graphics won't look as exciting or nice as that of 256 colors. You might want to consider trying 16 **grays**. I've tested Concentroids at 16 grays for a while and it looks quite good (PowerBook owners, take notice!). The animation was quite fast as well, even with background music on and sound on.

2. Turning off the background music. This will increase Concentroids animation a bit, since your Macintosh won't have to process the background soundtrack continuously (but it isn't as fun without the soundtrack, is it?)

3. Memory: If you have enough memory, try increasing the memory you have allocated to Concentroids. If you're running in black or white, or 16 colors, 1400K is large enough. If you're running in 256 colors, try allocating 1600K or more. Concentroids has a simple memory management scheme: it tries to keep as much sounds and pictures as possible loaded into memory, thus reducing the need for disk access. If this isn't possible, it just dumps whatever sounds and pictures aren't needed currently and loads the appropriate items. This scheme can be important if you're playing Concentroids on a floppy disk, where disk access is very slow. On hard disks, this isn't a problem, so you won't have to increase memory.

H. Gaming tips

Portability: As mentioned previously, I've tested Concentroids extensively on a PowerBook (PB100, to be precise) and I believe it's a great game to play on the road. Plug in a set of earphones, turn on the background music, and start matching. I'm quite proud the quality of the soundtrack is such that you can listen to it with earphones and the music will **still** sound good. The only drawback is Concentroid's large size. Space is tight on most PowerBooks, so you'll have to decide whether you want Concentroids with you on the road or not.

Some hidden options (well, not hidden anymore):

When you start up Concentroids, hold down the following keys until you hear a "bell" sound, which will verify that you have selected that option.

Shift key: Preload all sounds into memory. Make sure you have enough memory. This option is especially useful for those running Concentroids off a floppy disk.

Option key: No matter how many colors you may have set your Mac to, this will tell Concentroids to play in black and white.

Strategy. A good strategy in Concentroids is to have one. Be systematic, trying to match across columns or going down rows, one at a time. Plus match wildcards with special Concentroids whenever you can. However, know when to match and when to save a wildcard. And if your memory is good enough, try saving Concentroids to get the consecutive matching bonuses. Other than that, enjoy!

I. Misc notes

1) **Thanks to where it's due**. In addition to those people I thanked previously, I would also like to give my appreciation to John Calhoun. His Glypha and Glypha II code helped me tremendously early on, when animation on the Macintosh was a difficult technique to find, not to mention learn! My regards, John!

2) **Resource sources**. A few of the resources used in this current version (some ppats and a few sounds) weren't created by me originally. If the authors would contact me, I would be glad to remove them from all future versions of Concentroids.