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Playing the Game

General

Cryptographer is a program designed to help in solving cryptograms. A cryptogram is a writing of text in code which makes it unreadable. Each letter has been substituted with another symbol or letter.

The game consists of finding the proper substitutes and thus decipher the code. This is done through trial and error and looking for clues. Clues maybe one letter words of which there are only two in the English language, i.e. "I" and "A". Statistics may also help, for example the letter "E" is the most common letter followed by "T", "A" and "O". The 5 vowels cover 40 % of all text. "LNRST" account for 30%, "JKQZ" for 2 % and the rest for 28%. Also words like "people" are a frequent occurrence in quotes, thus the pattern of ABcAdB is a giveaway. The start is always the hardest part. Three letter words such as "The" and "You" are common. Also some combinations of letters such as "th" or "ng" at the beginning or end of words can occur more than once. The secret is to keep on trying. It is this process which makes the program useful, because it facilitates the mechanical part, not the thinking or intellectual part

The program was designed to be played immediately without instructions or manuals to read. It tries to follow all Windows conventions. For the more curious, HELP files have been created to explain some of the inner workings and additional features.

Start, Restart and Reset

Simply click on any of the characters on the initial coded text in the **Code Window**. This will activate the **Alphaboard**, which provides a means of selecting the substitution character. Before clicking on any of the characters you can just move the cursor over the board and it will substitute the particular character at all its occurrences in the text of the Code Window. You can reset any character any time by clicking on it again in the Code Window. You can restart by clicking Restart or Reset. Reset will not reset the timer, Restart will.

Quit or Exit

To quit simply click on Quit, this will automatically cause the current quote in the current file to be displayed at the start the next time the program is started. It will also preserve the custom settings you may have selected. If you click on File and then Exit the program will start the next time with the same quote it started with this time and previous preferences.

Preferences

Personal preferences relating to fonts, colors and other features can be selected by clicking on Preferences from the **Menu Bar** on top of the window.

Fonts

Fonts can only be selected for the **Code Window** . You can select a different font for coded characters and solution characters. This way you can make solution characters very big and bold (max. Size 18) and at the same time coded characters small (min. Size 12). The size of the **Code Window** will adjust to accommodate 6 lines of 40 characters of the largest selected characters.

Color

Four groups of characters can be colored with Back and Fore ground colors:

- Code Characters.
- Solution Characters.
- String or Word Highlighted characters.
- Next Character.

It is best to pick high contrast combination for solution characters, for example black on white and low contrast for coded colors for example dark grey on light yellow. This will make the solution more visible for the eyes.

Frequencies

Character frequencies can be selected which will enable frequencies of characters in the **Code Window** to be shown in the **Alphaboard**. Be careful the frequencies are with respect to characters shown in the **Code Window**, not those part of the solution text.

Running Clock

Makes the timer always visible .

Custom Alphaboard

Allows the Alphaboard to be customized.

File System

Default File

When first installed the program loads the first quote from a default file called QUOTES.CGA . Whether the user solves this quote or not, if he or she clicks on Quit, the next time the program is loaded, it will always show the same quote from the last used file.

One can always browse the current file with the spin buttons in the **Status Bar**. The name of the current file is shown in the upper left hand corner.

Open

Only the registered version has access to the quote files. The shareware version has access to the QUOTES.CGA file only.

To load a new file, click on File then on Open and a dialog box will appear from which to select a new file. The file name is of the form: *.CGA You can order more quote files by contacting Forget-Me-Not shareware.

Daily Quote Files

This is another option under File. After you download the daily quote file from the WWW, and you move it to the same directory as where Cryptographer resides in, you can load it via this menu option. Only the registered version has access to this option.

Exit

Clicking on File then Exit will terminate the program and will cause the next time the program is started to start with the same quote it started with this time.

Editing System

The standard way of using Cryptographer is with the file system, however there are other ways of entering quotes or any text.

Clipboard

One way to enter quotes is via the clipboard. When importing a quote, get it into the clipboard from any source, then use Edit and Paste (Ctrl.V) to replace the current quote. You can also import straight text via the clipboard with Edit and Text Paste (Ctrl.T) it will be treated the same way as manually entered Straight text. It will be encoded and Hints will be available.

To export any quote use Edit and Cut (Ctrl.X) or Copy (Ctrl.C) and the whole quote will be transferred to the clipboard. Note that no highlighting is required, it will take the quote in its encrypted form for the shareware version and whatever the current content is of the code window for the registered version. Cut will also remove the quote from the window..

Type in your own

You can type in quotes in two ways, either as encrypted text from a newspaper or other source by clicking on Edit and then on Type in Quote. When you enter text you can mix upper and lower case characters, the program doesn't care. Of course no Hints will be available for already encrypted quotes. When you enter straight text, upon completion, the program will automatically generate a key and encode the text. This means that all the Hints are available when desired, which is not the case when you type in Encrypted text.

The supplied quote files are always in upper case to make it more challenging.

Hints

Letter

Sometimes it is difficult to find a good start in a Cryptogram, for this purpose you can ask for a hint. First select a character (with a click). Next click on Hints from the **Menu Bar** and click on Letter.

Word

First click on a word (with a double click) or any string (mouse-down, move left or right, mouse-up). As you might expect there is a penalty for using Hints, see Scoring for more information on this.

All

Selecting All will solve the whole cryptogram at once. No preselection is required.

You may see options for Cartoon and Double-Crostatic in light grey, these are build in for future use when these features may become available.

Timing

Many people are challenged when performing certain tasks and try to improve their abilities to do those tasks. This is true in sports, games of skill and mental games. For this purpose a timer starts to run as soon as the **Code Window** appears. The elapsed time is not shown normally, but can be made visible by clicking on the word Started in the Status Window. You can also elect to have a running clock via Preferences on the Menu Bar.

Scoring

Scoring is simply the elapsed time on the timer when the text has been decoded. This score is modified by the penalties for characters or words via the hint mechanism. For each quote in the file system there is also an average and the standard deviation stored as well. These scores were generated from either actual data from beta testers or from an algorithm. The comparison is then made with the current score and the stored score. An estimate is then made to rank the player against the stored parameters using the Normal distribution.

Penalties

Penalties are calculated based on stored parameters as follows:

Single Letter Penalty:

$$P = (C / N) * (A + 3 * SD)$$

Where:

A = Average time

C = The number of occurrences of this character in the text

N = Total number of characters in the quote not counting spaces.

SD = Standard Deviation

Word or String Penalty:

P = The sum of all characters in the string as single letter penalties.

Registration

This version of Cryptographer is initially the Shareware version. There is a registration process which transforms it into the Registered version. To register, click on Registration on the Menu bar, then on Prepare Registration and fill out the form. This form creates a text file which you can print and mail or attach to an email message to fmnshare@cphl.mindspring.com, with your remittance. You will then receive a 12 digit registration code, which when entered under Registration will activate the registered version of the program. Each separate installation of the program requires a license. Also see [License](#) for more information.

You will receive technical support via telephone (919) 929-1589 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST or E-mail at fmnshare@cphl.mindspring.com or via our home page at <http://www.mindspring.com/~fmnshare> or contact us at:
Forget-Me-Not Shareware
407 Clayton Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Single License

Each installation on a single computer requires a single license at \$10.00 + S and H.

Group License

The first copy costs \$10.00 , additional copies can be ordered at \$5.00 a piece. This will give you a group license. The person signing the form will be the principal owner,. It must be one order, you cannot add new members to an existing group. You will receive only one copy of the program and it, or copies there off, must be used for all other installations. The group will have one registration number. Maximum group size is 26.

Daily quote contest

At present we have:
Home page: <http://www.mindspring.com/~fmnshare> and,
Today's Encrypted Quote and Contest Page:
<http://www.mindspring.com/~fmnshare/today.html>

Daily Quotes

Cryptographer is able to handle encrypted daily quotes, downloaded via the internet. There are two ways to accomplish these, one for shareware and one for the licensed version.

Shareware Version

You need a web browser capable to handle forms and tables, then go to <http://www.mindspring.com/~fmnshare/today.html>

There you will find yesterday's quote you can just highlight and copy to the clipboard while viewing it. Then follow the normal procedure to paste it into the Code Window. You cannot participate in the daily contest with this version, but you can compare your score with the previous day top ten list. Also you will see the solution the next day.

Licensed Version

You need the same web browser pointed at the same page where you will find a download URL for today's daily quote.

Clicking here will download a file of the form EQyymmdd.DQF where yy is the year, mm the month and dd the day of month. When you receive this file put it in the same directory where Cryptographer resides. In Cryptographer use File and Daily Quotes to load it in.

This version allows for optional participation in a daily contest on the www.

Some browsers will copy the content of this file into the viewer. In that case you have to use File and Save As... with the same name as mentioned above directly into your Cryptographer directory. You can also click on the FTP option and setup a helper application to spawn Cryptographer and solve the cryptogram on-line.

Licensed Temporary Version

This version is made available to allow registered customers to play as soon as possible. It is delivered via Email, does not include quote files and works for a limited number of days.

Contest

This part is still somewhat experimental. After successful completion of the puzzle, you will be given the opportunity to submit for the daily contest. See **Contest Rules** for more information. These rules will change over time and with experience.

Contest Rules

There are no guarantees, implied or otherwise, of anything. The contest rules cannot be contested.

The only reward is the honor of being on the top ten list the next day. This is a, not for profit, game.

Your score is not dependent on when you do the puzzle during the day, only the time it takes you to do it.

Tentatively, quotes will be posted before midnight Eastern Standard Time (EST), which is usually Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) minus 5 hours.

All entries have to be in by 9PM (21:00 hours) EST. You must figure out what these times relate to locally.

The validity of your entry is not dependent on your local date, the quote has an internal identification for validity.

You can give yourself an alias name, any mention of your entry in the top ten list will be by that name. You can only participate if you have the licensed version or a special temporary version thereof.

Included in your entry is your customer order number, so we do know who originally bought the program.

Included is also a time limit, below which we recommend you to submit your entry. This limit is intended to control the number of entries that are submitted, it does not measure the quality of your performance.

When you take more than the time limit, we recommend that you do not submit. Initially you will be able to submit anyway. In the future that may not always be the case.

This is still an experiment. We will give it our best effort to organize, process and publish the results on our web page.

[Click Here](#) to see how to submit. Good luck to all.

How to submit your entry.

Solve the cryptogram

Launch Cryptographer, click on File, then Daily Quote. You will see the dialog box, you may have to find your downloaded file QEyymmdd.DQF. You should receive a message informing you of the daily quote and its potential submission for entry. Your time starts as soon as you click. You cannot Restart, in any way or it will invalidate your entry for that day. You can use Reset, and it will not reset the timer. After you have solved it, you will have a chance to submit and give yourself an alias name by which we can potentially list you in the top ten for that day. You can also invoke Cryptographer on-line by setting up your browser to recognize the *.DQF extension. Cryptographer will then startup with the daily quote already loaded in.

Submitting your entry

You can submit with ordinary e-mail to fmnshare@cphl.mindspring.com. You have to attach the submission file of the form Qnnnnnnn.DQC, which should be in the same directory where you loaded the daily quote from, to the E-mail message. The submission panel will always indicate the Email address to use. It should be MIME encoded . You can also submit on-line. In this version the daily submission entry is also copied to the clipboard. A submission form is provided on the webpage where the clipboard content can be pasted (Ctrl-v) in the appropriate box. After pasting it in click on Submit to send it.

License

By using this game you accept the terms of the following agreement.

If this is the shareware version you can freely distribute this program.

If this is the licensed version you cannot copy this program or distribute it.

The registration code personal and cannot be given to others unless it is given to members of a group with a group license.

Each installation must have a separate license. The program is supplied as is, without any guarantee for quality, performance or integrity.

Forget-Me-Not Shareware does not assume any responsibility, expressed or implied, for any damages this program may cause to other programs, data, hardware or self-esteem.

Code Window

The window where the encrypted text appears initially. Its size depends on the largest font being used. Its horizontal position is always centered on the screen, the vertical position can be customized. The background color is the same as the solution background color.

Alphaboard

The rectangular area with on top all letters of the alphabet. Initially it is shown on top with the same colors as the Code Window. As characters are replaced the substitute characters are replaced on top with Solution Colors. The default location is between the code window and the bottom of the screen. The size and location are fully customizable and can be set by selecting Custom Alphaboard under Preferences and preserved by exiting the program via Quit.

Menu Bar

The area on top of the window with the words File Edit Preferences etc.

Status Bar

This is the upper area which displays the current file, scroll bars, Timer and Reset button. The scroll bars can be clicked on to display any of the quotes within the current file. You can hold down the mouse on the slider and preselect any quote quickly, then when you release the button it will show that quote. When clicked on the word "Started" it will take a reading from the timer. Reset will reset all the characters in the Code Window and restart the timer.

