

VW

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REVISION HISTORY

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Contents

1	vw	1
1.1	VWorlds.guide	1
1.2	VWorlds.guide/INTRO	2
1.3	VWorlds.guide/REQUI	3
1.4	VWorlds.guide/INSTL	4
1.5	VWorlds.guide/START	4
1.6	VWorlds.guide/TOOLS	5
1.7	VWorlds.guide/KEYBD	6
1.8	VWorlds.guide/COMET	6
1.9	VWorlds.guide/REFER	7
1.10	VWorlds.guide/QUEST	11
1.11	VWorlds.guide/DISTR	13
1.12	VWorlds.guide/HISTY	14
1.13	VWorlds.guide/THANX	16
1.14	VWorlds.guide/AUTHR	16

Chapter 1

VW

1.1 VWorlds.guide

VWorlds

An astronomy/night sky plotting utility

Version 2.1

By Peter Knight

28/4/96

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Introduction

What are the features?

System Requirements

Minimum requirements for your Amiga

Installation

How to install VWorlds

Getting started

First steps

Tool types/CLI arguments

To configure VWorlds

Keyboard short cuts

The keys that make life easier

Comet database
How to add your own objects

Reference
The menus and gadgets explained

Frequently asked questions
And their answers

Distribution
Legal stuff

Modification History
What was done and when

Thanks
The credits

Author
If you want to contact me

1.2 VWorlds.guide/INTRO

Introduction

VWorlds is a utility that allows the generation of pictures of the night sky from any point on Earth (and indeed from any of the planets or other objects whose position is calculated by the program). The main features of the code are,

- * Accurate numerical ephemeris giving planetary/lunar/solar positions to a few seconds of arc.
 - * Rendering of all major solar system bodies (Sun, Moon, planets, selected comets & satellites). The solar system can be viewed from a point on any of these objects, not just the Earth.
 - * Texture-mapped images of the Earth, Moon and Mars when viewed from another body, with shading of night/twilight zones.
 - * Scalable projected map of the world showing shaded night/twilight zones, position of observer and location of Moon's umbra and penumbra during solar eclipses.
 - * Maps of Moon and Mars showing longitude of central meridian.
-

- * Orrery, showing positions and orbits of planets and comets from any point with respect to the Sun.
- * Planetarium view, showing major objects above the horizon.
- * Customizable comet database. The position of comets entered into the database is calculated and their position displayed.
- * Plotting of all stars down to magnitude 7.0 from the SAO catalogue, with proper motion information.
- * Accurate prediction of 'special events'---solar/lunar eclipse, full/new moon, Mercury/Venus conjunction, Mars opposition and lunar occultation.
- * Shading of Milky Way region.
- * Constellation outlines and names.
- * Overlaid annotated grids (horizon, equatorial and ecliptic coordinate systems).
- * Selectable viewport orientation (horizon, equatorial or ecliptic systems).
- * Shading of sky region below horizon.
- * Continuous update and accelerated time modes for easy animation.
- * Easy-to-use gadtools interface.

1.3 VWorlds.guide/REQUI

System Requirements

The following are the minimum requirements for running VWorlds:

- * 256 colour intuition screen.
- * 3.5 Mb free RAM (1 Mb chip / 2.5 Mb fast).
- * Workbench 3.0.
- * 68020 processor.
- * Hard disk drive with 2 Mb free space.

The following are recommended:

- * Math coprocessor (speeds up the program significantly).
 - * Multiscan monitor (otherwise you're stuck with an interlaced screen).
 - * Hardware clock (to set the correct time on start-up)
-

*** Important note for gfx card users ***

VWorlds uses only OS-friendly calls so may work with your gfx card, depending on the quality of the emulation (hold the shift key down as the program starts to get a screen mode requester). A couple of people have reported problems with CyberGfx cards (VWorlds uses intuition calls involving double buffered/attached screens which are apparently not emulated).

1.4 VWorlds.guide/INSTL

Installation

Installation is easy: simply double-click on the Install icon once you have unpacked the archive. Installation requires at least 2 Mb free disk space.

1.5 VWorlds.guide/START

Getting Started

VWorlds can be run from both Workbench and shell. From Workbench, simply double click on the program icon (either VWorlds_881, if you have a math coprocessor, or VWorlds, otherwise). If using the shell, you can either add the program directory to your 'PATH' variable, or copy the executable to the C: directory, before entering the name of the relevant program. A number of

Tool Types and CLI arguments
are supported.

Before proceeding, you should set your longitude and latitude. This couldn't be much simpler: select world map mode from the 'Mode' menu, and then click on the required location. In addition, you may wish to set your time zone so that the program knows the difference between local time (as shown on the control panel) and Universal Time (UT). If the time zone correction is left at zero, it will be assumed that your local time is equal to UT. Use the LT-UT slider gadget to select your time difference from UT (you can use the 'Show time zone' item from the 'Options' menu in world map mode to guide you). Finally, select 'Save config' from the 'Project' menu. This will save your preferences in the file 's:VWorlds.config ←
'.

The program controls are quite straightforward (although you should have a look at the list of

Keyboard Shortcuts

), and I suggest you dive straight in

and experiment with the program. Try these events for starters:

- * Total solar eclipse (August 11, 1999). Note that the approximate outlines of the moon's penumbra and umbra are shaded on the world map, making the visualisation of the eclipse path simple. Also, try a view of the Earth from the Sun to get a feel for the geometry of the eclipse (click on the Sun in the Site listview gadget, and click on Earth in the Centre gadget, then zoom in).
- * Total lunar eclipse (September 27, 1996). In telescope mode, the Earth's umbra is rendered as a reddish shadow on the face of the moon, allowing the progress of the eclipse to be followed. A view of the Earth from the Moon will show you at a glance from which areas of the Earth the eclipse is visible.
- * Occultation of sigma Sagittarii by Venus (November 17, 1981). The BAA handbook lists the UT of disappearance and reappearance for Greenwich as 15h 29.5m and 15h 38.2m respectively.
- * Occultation of Mars by Venus (October 13, 1590). Try the views from Earth->Venus and Mars->Venus to study this rare event.
- * Earth transit from Mars (November 10, 2084). Select Mars as the site and zoom in on the Sun (probably pointless, but you never know, someone might be there to see it!).
- * Jupiter and Saturn from Comet Hale-Bopp (any time in 2008) for unusual views of these giants.

1.6 VWorlds.guide/TOOLS

Tool types and CLI arguments

The following tool types and (case sensitive) CLI arguments are supported:

ET-UT=<Time> (WB + CLI)

Customize the difference (in seconds) between ephemeris and universal time. This varies slowly and generally unpredictably with time due to non-uniform rotation of the Earth. The default value is 60 seconds. Overrides the setting in 's:VWorlds.config'.

MODE=<MULTISCAN, PAL, NTSC, EURO72, DBLPAL or DBLNTSC> (WB + CLI)

Instruct VWorlds to use requested screen mode. It is best to choose a mode with square pixels on your monitor. You can also select a screen mode by holding down either shift key on startup. Overrides the setting in 's:VWorlds.config'.

DEPTH5 (WB + CLI)

Select 32 colour screen, instead of the usual 256 colours. This disables all texture mapping, but the program uses much less chip RAM and is faster.

TMSIZE=<1, 2, or 3> (WB + CLI)

Select the maximum diameter in pixels ('n') of texture-mapped disks. Larger values allow larger texture-mapped images, but require more memory. The ← default

value is 1 (n=200) which should be fine for most users. If you have lots of memory (and a fast Amiga) you may like to set this to 2 (n=400), or even 3 (n=800). The amount of extra memory required is roughly (7*n*n) bytes.

? (CLI only)

Display the template for CLI arguments.

1.7 VWorlds.guide/KEYBD

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

- * C - Toggle control panel on/off.
- * B - Toggle title bar on/off.

- * I (SHIFT-I) - Zoom in (quickly).
- * O (SHIFT-O) - Zoom out (quickly).

- * F - Increase animation time-step.
- * S (SHIFT-S) - Decrease animation time-step (stop animation).

- * Y - Activate year string gadget.
- * T (SHIFT-T) - Increment (decrement) month.
- * D (SHIFT-D) - Increment (decrement) day.
- * H (SHIFT-H) - Increment (decrement) hour.
- * M (SHIFT-M) - Increment (decrement) minutes.
- * N - Set to current time.

- * Amiga-S - Save screen
- * Amiga-P - Print screen
- * Amiga-A - Display information about program
- * Amiga-Q or Q - Exit program

- * Amiga-W - World map mode
- * Amiga-L - Planetarium mode
- * Amiga-T - Telescope mode
- * Amiga-O - Orrery mode

- * Amiga-R - Rising time of chart centre.
- * Amiga-E - Setting time of chart centre.

- * 0...9 - Centre view on object (0=Sun, 1=Mercury, 2=Venus, 3=Moon/Earth, 4=Mars, 5=Jupiter, 6=Saturn, 7=Uranus, 8=Neptune, 9=Pluto)

- * Cursor keys - Rotate orrery.

- * Shift keys - Hold down to choose a screen mode when the program begins.

1.8 VWorlds.guide/COMET

The Comet Database

When starting, VWorlds reads comet orbital elements from the file 'comet.dat', and displays the position of these comets in telescope and orrery modes. If you have elements of a comet you wish to study, these can be entered into this file using any text editor. The information you need is,

- * Name
- * Time of perihelion passage.
- * Perihelion distance
- * Eccentricity
- * Inclination
- * Longitude of the ascending node
- * Argument of perihelion
- * Equinox for orbital elements

For efficiency reasons (the comet orbits for orrery mode are calculated when the program starts, which can be slow), you may only have 5 comets active at any one time. However, you can store the elements of as many comets you wish in 'comet.dat' by preceding the names of comets you are not interested in with a double backslash "//".

1.9 VWorlds.guide/REFER

The Gadgets

Year, month, days, hours, mins

These will be initialised to your local time when the program starts (assuming the system clock is set right!).

LT-UT

Use this slider gadget to set the difference (in hours) between your local time (LT) and universal time (UT).

Faster

Click on this gadget to increase the time-step by a factor of 8. If the Slower gadget is ghosted when you select this gadget, you'll be in real-time mode. The maximum time-step corresponds to an update rate of about 100 years per second real time. Beyond this, the time-step will wrap-around back to zero.

Slower

Use to decrease the time-step by a factor of 8 (or set to zero if the shift key is also held down). The gadget will be ghosted when the

time-step is zero (the program will not eat CPU cycles in this state).

Now

Sets the local time to that currently given by the system clock.

Site

Click on one of the listed objects to move your viewpoint to the position of that object.

Field

Displays, and allows you to enter, the field of view (in degrees) for telescope mode.

Zoom In

In world map and telescope modes, decreases the field of view by a factor of 1.4 (or 10 if the shift key is also held down). In orrery mode, the viewpoint is moved closer to the Sun, while keeping the field of view fixed at 40 degrees.

Zoom Out

In world map and telescope modes, decreases the field of view by a factor of 1.4 (or 10 if the shift key is also held down). The field of view cannot exceed 60 degrees in telescope mode. In orrery mode, the viewpoint is moved further from the Sun, while keeping the field of view fixed at 40 degrees.

Centre

Click on one of the listed objects to centre it on the screen, and track it (telescope mode only).

SAO no.

Enter the SAO number of a star to centre it on the screen (telescope mode only). Note that only a small fraction of the SAO database is included--- stars brighter than magnitude 7.0, about 15000 stars (to put this in perspective, the unaided eye can only see stars brighter than about ← magnitude 6 in perfect conditions, about 6000 stars). If you enter the number of a star not in the database, the control screen is flashed.

The Project Menu

Save configuration

Save the current setup (longitude, latitude, display mode, field of view, and virtually everything else!) to the file 's:VWorlds.config'. This file ← is loaded when the program starts.

Save screen

Prompts for a file name and then saves the current screen (the title bar ← will be included in the image, unless you disable it by pressing 'B', and then save the screen using Amiga-S).

Print screen

Prints the screen to the preferences printer.

Pointing info

Displays a requester with information about the telescope pointing. ←
Includes
Julian Date, ET-UT, local sidereal time (hours, minutes, seconds), hour ←
angle
of field centre (hours, minutes, seconds), and declination of field centre
(degrees, arcminutes, arcseconds), Some of this information could be useful ←
if
(like me) you have a telescope which you wish to point using setting ←
circles.

About

To display a little requester with program info.

Quit

To exit the program

The Options Menu

Show time zone

If selected, an indication of the extent of the current time zone (as determined by the LT-UT setting) will be drawn on the world map. This is useful as a guide when setting LT-UT, but is not totally accurate since time zone boundaries are generally not simply drawn along lines of longitude.

Stars

Draw stars?

Constellation shapes

Draw constellation shapes?

Constellation labels

Draw constellation labels?

Milky way

Draw Milky Way?

Planet labels

Write name and distance underneath each planet?

Planet markings

Draw planet surface detail (including any texture maps)?

Ecliptic

Draw line along ecliptic (the plane containing the Earth's orbit about the Sun)?

Horizon

Shade area below horizon?

Messier objects

Mark position of objects from Messier catalogue?

Close Workbench

Attempt to close the workbench screen? The program guzzles chip memory in some display modes. Using this option, you can just about utilise a

very large 256 colour 'Super72' super-hires-laced screen with 2 Mb. This function fails if another application has windows open on the workbench screen.

Invert view

Invert the view in telescope mode to give a view similar to that obtained using an astronomical telescope (only applies to views from the Earth).

Fast gfx

Attempt to increase rendering speed by using the CPU for certain graphics operations? May give unpredictable results on systems with graphics cards.

Units

Select units to be used for objects within 0.5 astronomical units (AU) of viewpoint. Either kilometers (KM), or miles (MI).

Orientation

Select orientation of viewport in telescope mode: (1) horizon, viewport is aligned with the horizon at your selected location on earth, (2) equatorial
'
viewport is aligned with projection of the earth's equator on the sky, and
(3) ecliptic, viewport is aligned with the ecliptic.

Grid type

Overlay the view in telescope mode with a grid in one of three coordinate systems: (1) horizon (0 is North, 90 is East, 180 is South, 270 is West), (2) equatorial (useful for locating objects on a star chart), and (3) ecliptic.

The Mode Menu

World map

Displays a projected map of the world with the observing site marked, and twilight/night zones shaded. Also displays position of Moon's shadow if
there
is a total solar eclipse.

Moon map

Displays map of Earth with position of Earth->Moon line marked.

Mars map

Displays map of Mars with position of Earth->Moon line marked.

Planetarium

Display of major objects above the local horizon. The current telescope pointing direction is marked, if above the horizon, with yellow cross-hairs
'
Clicking on the planetarium sets a new telescope centre and changes to telescope mode.

Telescope

Displays an image of the night sky as you might get with a telescope.

Orrery

Shows the solar system from a general point in space, looking at the Sun.

The Special Menu

Rising time

Find rising time of current chart centre on current day. If the object is permanently above or below the horizon, the control screen is flashed.

Setting time

Find setting time of current chart centre on current day. If the object is permanently above or below the horizon, the control screen is flashed.

Next new moon

Set the local time to the time of next new moon.

Next full moon

Set the local time to the time of next full moon.

Next solar eclipse

Set the local time to the time of next solar eclipse (whether partial, annular or total) anywhere in the world. The eclipse may not be visible from your selected position on the world map.

Next lunar eclipse

Set the local time to the time of next lunar eclipse.

Mercury conjunction

Set the local time to the time of next inferior conjunction (Mercury between Earth and Sun).

Venus conjunction

Set the local time to the time of next inferior conjunction (Venus between Earth and Sun).

Mars opposition

Set the local time to the time of next opposition (Mars closest to Earth on its orbit).

Next occultation

Set the local time to the time the moon next occults one of the stars in the database. Since such occultations are quite common, only those events that are visible from your selected position on the world map will be selected (Sun must be below horizon and the moon must be visible). Only disappearances are calculated, not reappearances. Times are generally accurate to within a minute.

1.10 VWorlds.guide/QUEST

Frequently asked questions

Q. How do I change the screen mode that VWorlds uses?

A. There are three possibilities:

(1) Hold down either shift key when starting the program. You will be presented with a standard screen mode requester listing all the modes available. Note that some screen modes are unsuitable for use (either because they are low resolution or have non-square pixels).

(2) Edit the project's
tool types

.

(3) Enter the desired screen mode using the
command line
interface.

Q. VWorlds appears to run correctly but the menus don't have any items.
What's wrong?

A. You are probably very low on chip memory. Exit the program and try to free as much memory as possible.

Q. I'm looking at a planet in telescope mode, but all I get is a blank screen.
What's wrong?

A. The field of view is probably very small. Try zooming out by pressing shift-O several times.

Q. How can I stop animations quickly?

A. Pressing shift-S will stop the animation immediately. Check out the
keyboard shortcut list

.

Q. Where can I obtain data for the comet.dat file?

A. Up to date elements for the brighter comets are quite widely available on the Worldwide Web. Other resources include books on astronomy/computing (eg. Peter Duffett-Smith's book 'Practical Astronomy with Your Calculator'), and the IAU circulars.

Q. What is the ecliptic?

A. The ecliptic is the plane containing the orbit of the Earth about the Sun. It is useful to plot it since the planets are generally never very far above or below.

Q. How accurate is the program?

A. All of the objects and planetary surface markings are rendered to a high degree of accuracy, sufficient for most amateur astronomy use. Planetary positions are calculated to an accuracy of a few seconds of arc over the period 1900-2100. This is sufficient for the prediction of planetary occultations, provided they are not grazing the planet disk. The times of solar/lunar eclipses are generally accurate to within a couple of minutes. Stellar positions take into account proper motion, and are accurate to better than 1 arc second. Geocentric positions are corrected for precession, nutation, aberration and light-travel time, but not refraction. The positions of the satellites of Jupiter should be accurate to better than 0.1 Jupiter radii over

the period 1600-2200. The position of Titan is not so accurate (about 0.5 Saturn radii).

Q. I have a CyberGfx card. Why do I get an error when I try to use a cgfx screen?

A. VWorlds apparently uses some intuition calls (those involving double-buffered/attached screens) that are not emulated properly. As far as I'm aware, there is currently no solution but to resort to an AGA screen mode.

Q. The Moon/planet texture maps disappears when I zoom in. Why?

A. Planets are not texture-mapped if the diameter of the disk is more than a certain number of pixels ('n'), but reverts to a polygon rendering method. ←
 This is to improve execution speed and reduce memory usage. You can adjust 'n' using the
 command line and tool types
 .

Q. What are the cross-hairs that are plotted on the Moon and Mars maps?

A. The cross-hairs in the Moon/Mars modes indicate the intersection of the planet->Earth line segment with the planet surface. The longitude is ←
 therefore the longitude of the central meridian, and the latitude is the tilt of the North pole towards the Earth (Mars observers should find this useful!).

Q. The texture-mapped Moon image updates very slowly in animations. Any hints?

A. The texture-mapped images of the Moon and Mars in telescope mode update much faster if the screen is oriented with the equator or ecliptic. This is because of a code optimisation that is not possible in horizon mode (when the images rotate as their position in the sky changes).

Q. How do I change the centre in telescope mode?

A. There are two methods of changing the centre in telescope mode,

- (1) Select an object from the centre listview gadget on the right hand side of the control panel. In this case, the object will remain centred regardless of the object's motion with respect to the background starfield.
- (2) By clicking on a point in the field of view. The right ascension and declination of this point will become the new centre.

Note: In orrery mode, clicking on the view rotates the viewpoint around the Sun ←
 .

1.11 VWorlds.guide/DISTR

Distribution

This program is released into the public domain, and may be freely distributed as long as all document files, program executables and other binary files are included in their entirety.

Files included in this distribution:

```

comet.dat           - Comet orbital elements
earth.map           - Earth texture map (IFF ILBM format)
Install             - Installation script
Install.info        - Icon file
map.dat            - World map data
mars.map           - Mars texture map (IFF ILBM format)
messier.dat         - Messier object data
moon.map           - Moon texture map (IFF ILBM format)
mw.dat             - Milky way outline data
orrery.dat         - Orrery data (planet orbits)
ReadMe.doc         - Text document
ReadMe.doc.info    - Icon file
shape.dat          - Constellation shape data
stars.dat          - Star data (position, magnitude, proper motion)
VWorlds_881        - Executable for 68020-40 with FPU
VWorlds.guide      - Manual
VWorlds.guide.info - Icon file
VWorlds_881.info   - Icon file
VWorlds            - Executable for 68020 without FPU
VWorlds.info       - Icon file
VWorlds.config     - Configuration file

extras.info        - Icon file
extras/VWorlds.info - MWB-style program icon
extras/VWorlds2.info - MWB-style draw icon
extras/earth.map   - Topographical map of Earth (IFF ILBM format)
extras/ReadMe.doc  - Extras documentation
extras/ReadMe.doc.info - Icon file

```

1.12 VWorlds.guide/HISTY

Modification History

```

v1.0    20/3/96    Initial AmiNet release

v1.1    30/3/96    Improved rendering of disk shadows (now not drawn when
                    phase is full). Image of comet nucleus now drawn when you
                    zoom in close. Tidied up rendering of Saturn's shadow on
                    rings (now slightly slower, but looks better). Title bar
                    can now be switched off. Added satellites (Io, Europa,
                    Ganymede, Callisto and Titan). Satellite labels not drawn
                    until you zoom in. Improved the accuracy of the long-term
                    comet ephemeris. Added comet Kohler to database.

```

Minor bug fixes: Corrected orientation of Earth's orbit in orrery mode. Corrected situation where comet may not be rendered when viewed from another comet. Fixed a bug which could cause planets to be only partially

rendered, especially without FPU (never actually observed it to happen in v1.0, but would have been very noticeable in this version).

v1.2 31/3/96 Any error messages now displayed in a requester, rather than being directed to stderr. Can now choose between miles and kilometers for units. Holding down the shift key on startup now displays screen mode requester. Saved screens are now compressed. Preferences file greatly extended---you can now totally customize how the program starts up. Messier objects added. Improved accuracy of planetary axis orientation, and added more detail to planet surfaces. Added installer script, and CLI interface. New pointing info requester.

Bug fixes: Corrected error in rendering of Mars polar caps (introduced in v1.1 embarrassingly). Time zone information should have been saved in config file, but wasn't---now fixed. Fixed initialisation of time gadgets (they weren't initialised to local time in some situations, although subsequent updates were OK). Adjusted clipping limits in world map mode---they were a pixel too wide when the title bar was turned off, causing a MungWall 'hit'.

v2.0 11/4/96 Satellites now not illuminated when eclipsed by primary (even works for the Moon when viewed from another planet), and shadows now cast on primary during transit. Improved accuracy of algorithm for calculating satellite positions. Improved rendering of Moon during lunar eclipse (shadow now overlaid on lunar disk), so earth shadow 'object' removed. New texture maps: Earth (improved), Moon and Mars. Added Moon and Mars map modes. Can now close Workbench on startup or during execution. Object rising/setting times now calculated. Various code optimisations (but program sadly a bit slower overall due to switch from 32 to 256 colour screen). Added option to invert view.

Bug fixes: Disk of Sun now rendered if you zoom in close in orrery mode (broken in v1.2). Fixed screen saving bug (I hope!).

v2.1 28/4/96 Added 32 colour screen option for users with only 1 Mb chip memory, or those who want faster screen update (disables texture mapping). Implemented 'fast graphics' option, which uses the CPU to render directly into the bitmap for some functions. Added planetarium mode. Now shows busy pointer during calculations (except during animations to avoid constant switching). Added field of view string gadget to control panel. Texture mapped objects can now be up to 800 pixels in diameter, rather than 200.

Bug fixes: Corrected minor error in handling of menu toggle items.

1.13 VWorlds.guide/THANX

Credits

I would like to thank the following people for their suggestions, comments and bug reports...

Christian Wasner	Jeremy Morse
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Mark Jones	

Also, many thanks to...

Tom Heeren (for the contents of the 'Extras' drawer)
Simon Edwards (for Image Engineer)
Jan van den Baard (for GadToolsBox)

1.14 VWorlds.guide/AUTHR

Author

If you have any questions about this program (don't forget to check

the FAQ
) , use it regularly, or have any suggestions for further improvements then I would be glad to hear from you. Also, drop me a line if you want to become a 'registered user' and receive e-mail notification when new versions are available.

Finally, I'd particularly appreciate contributions of additional planet/satellite texture maps (these should be standard flat projections, just like the included '#?.map' files).

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