# · Welcome to BeamWars!  *Version 2.3.2.*
## ...by Steve Crutchfield.

This game is Shareware!   If you enjoy it, please send me the nominal fee of $15 and whatever questions or suggestions you may have.   If you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, I'll add you to my mailing list and you'll receive information about our many other Shareware and Freeware programs along with periodic updates for the price of a disk (whatta deal!).

Steve Crutchfield
3000 N. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60657-5553.

If you just want to make a comment or otherwise get in touch with me, you can contact me through the Internet (stevec@imsa.edu—the best way to reach me) or through America Online (SteveC24).   Please send me any and all bug reports (ick) and possibilities for future improvement.   Help make BeamWars a better game!

## • Instructions

BeamWars consists of three files:   the BeamWars application, the high scores file, and the preferences file (the latter two, by the way, are very small—usually less than three kilobytes).   If all three files aren't in the same directory and named as BeamWars expects them to be when you open the application, you'll be asked to choose to either find any files BeamWars is unable to locate or to have BeamWars create new, blank copies.   If you choose to find the files, the standard "open" dialog box will appear.   If you can't find the files, click Cancel and BeamWars will create them.

Before beginning the game, choose Controls from the Game menu to configure the way the want it played.   Choosing this menu item brings up a dialog box allowing you to set certain options affecting the play of the game.   Any player can be controlled by a human or by a novice-level or expert-level "automaton," or it can be made "inactive" (in which case it doesn't appear in the game).   The keys used for moving each player can also be set (almost all keys on the keyboard—including the arrow keys—can be used).   To change a player's color, click the Beam Color... button with the settings for that player.   If the Beams Retract option is on, beams that are destroyed during the game will withdraw from the playing field.   If this option is off, destroyed beams remain on the board.   The controls dialog is also used for entering the names of the players.   If you don't open the controls dialog before a game, another dialog box will appear when you begin the game asking for the names of the four players so you can be sure they'll be listed in the high scores file correctly.

To save your settings to disk, click Save Defaults.   To use previously saved settings, click Use Defaults.   When specifying the controls, keep in mind that player

one always starts at the bottom of the screen, player two starts at the top, player three starts on the left side, and player four starts on the right side.

BeamWars is a lot more fun if you play it with other people.   However, it's difficult to crowd four people around one keyboard comfortably.   For this reason, it's a good idea to connect two keyboards together when you're playing the game if at all possible.   It reduces keyboard crowding and makes the games less difficult to play!

The Sound option in the Game menu allows sound to be turned on or off (the sound is on if wavy lines appear next to the speaker icon in the menu).   Turning off the sound makes the game a lot faster if you're playing it from a floppy disk.    (Playing off of floppy, by the way, is absolutely not recommended!   It's much too slow!   Copy the game onto a hard disk if at all possible.)   BeamWars does not support sound in system versions lower than 6.0.2; if you are running an earlier system, an alert box will be displayed when you open the game and this menu item will be disabled.

### • Playing the Game

To start the game, choose Play Game from the File menu.   At the beginning of the game, each player's potential bonus register (listed next to "Bo:" on the scoreboard at the bottom of the screen) is set to five thousand points.   The first round then begins and, after a brief count-down, the active beams are fired from the edges of the screen.

Each player changes the direction of his or her beam's movement by pressing a key.   Colliding with any part of any beam is fatal, as is colliding with the walls surrounding the playing area.   The goal, then, is simple:   try to force your opponents to crash by locking them into small areas of the playing field, while keeping as much room for yourself as possible!   Once a beam is destroyed, it retracts to its origin and the game speeds up slightly.   The explosion caused by the destruction of a beam will remove portions of other beams in the area, freeing up space on the board.   If all human players have been destroyed and only automatons remain, the game speeds up greatly to bring the round to a swift end (since humans usually get very bored after watching automatons spiral mindlessly around the board for a few minutes).

As the round progresses, active players accumulate points as long as they stay alive.   (The more active players there are in the game, by the way, the faster the points accumulate.)   When all beams but one have been destroyed, the round ends.   The winner then wins the points remaining in his or her bonus register.   All bonus registers are then reset, the winner's is increased, and the next round begins.

The "board energy" is the amount of energy remaining in the grid upon which the beams travel; the beams drain the grid of its energy as they move.   When the board is down to about one-half its original energy, a warning buzzer sounds briefly, and the grid loses its ability to resist the inward pressure of the walls.   The walls then begin to advance onto the grid—moving forward more quickly as the board energy continues to

decrease.   The purpose of the buzzer is to let all players know that they should get away from the walls!   Although it is feasible (and good strategy) to maneuver behind a beam's starting point in the early stages of the game, once the walls start closing in it's no longer possible.

   When the grid is down to one-tenth of its original energy, another buzzer begins to sound.   When all of the board energy is depleted, the entire grid is extinguished and the game ends.   The contestant with the most points is the victor.   A table showing the final scores for the four players will appear at the end of the game, and any human players whose scores are high enough will, as always, have their names added to the high score list.

———————————————

A product of Polaris™ Software...
Quality Shareware and Freeware for the Macintosh.™

© 1992 Steve Crutchfield.

For more information, choose About Polaris Software... from the Apple menu.   Have fun!

BeamWars was developed and tested on an 8-Megabyte Apple® Macintosh® IIci computer running System 7.0.   Although it has been tested on all Macintosh II platforms available as of this release and the Macintosh LC, BeamWars may not run as well or as quickly in less powerful environments.   A good practice is to start up without extensions (also known as INITs) before running BeamWars.   This gives the game the memory it wants and speeds up play significantly.

Version 2.3 was the first major release of BeamWars, and was quite buggy (avoid version 2.3 at all costs).   Version 2.3.1 fixed several bugs that escaped attention in version 2.3, and in particular made sound support much more stable.   Version 2.3.2 adds support for multiple-monitor machines.

BeamWars is System-7 compatible (in fact, it works significantly better under System 7 than under older systems) and 32-bit clean, and should have no problems running on the Macintosh Quadra family of computers.   It does not run on computers with monitors smaller than 640 x 480 pixels (so Macintosh LC computers with the Apple 12" Monitor will not support BeamWars) and it requires a Motorola MC68020 or better microprocessor.   A black-and-white version will be released soon   which will work with variable monitor sizes and older Macintoshes, so stay tuned!

Apple and Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc.