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How To Register YAAC

Y.A.A.C. is distributed as shareware. You may freely evaluate this program for 30 days. If you enjoy it and find it of value you are encouraged to register your copy.

Registering not only keeps the shareware concept alive and helps fund further development of this program, it also gives you a warm fuzzy feeling inside knowing that you've done the right thing. It also lets you access the cool Cheats dialog! When you register, you'll receive a special "magic word" which you can enter into the box on the Registration dialog box which will unlock the Cheats dialog!

Y.A.A.C. is only \$10 (U.S.). Send check or money order to:

David Bollinger
P.O. Box 894
Denair, CA 95316
U.S.A.

Be sure to include your full name and mailing address. You may also include an e-mail address if you'd like your "magic word" sent to you as quick as possible. :) Comments and suggestions welcome.

The Story

(As if an arcade game needs a story...)

You, Captain "Sparky" Jones, have been chosen by the Galactic High Command to patrol sector Aleph 12 and rid it of debris and hostile aliens. OK, so really you're just a glorified garbage collector, but so what!

In order to accomplish your mission you have been given command of a seriously destructive piece of machinery, the Splorkon Systems XJ-37 Interceptor. Not only does it have more firepower than many small countries, it also has many convenient compartments for storing your lunch, toenail clippers, spare change, etc.

As you patrol deeper into the sector, you will find more and more debris, more and more aliens, which to clean up. So, not only does your job never end, it just keeps getting harder. Oh, and did I mention that Galactic High Command doesn't pay extra for overtime?

So what're ya waiting around for? Get going soldier!

How To Play

Remember the original Atari arcade game "Asteroids"* ?

Well, YAAC is a derivation of that game. It is not an attempt to directly copy the original; rather it is an attempt to try and add some new variety to an old favorite. However, the object of the game is the same as are the skills required, so if you're familiar with the original this variant should also feel pretty familiar.

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* "Asteroids" is a trademark of Atari.

Objective

The object of the game is to clear the entire screen of asteroids by blasting them to bits with your ship's weapons. You must avoid colliding with the asteroids, while collecting bonuses and avoiding and destroying any enemy ships that appear. After you have cleared a wave of asteroids, a new wave will begin, each successive wave becoming more and more difficult. You are given 4 ships with which to accomplish your mission.

To start a new game:

From the title screen simply press a key to begin, or select New from the Game menu.

Controls

Left Arrow	Rotate Counter Clockwise
Right Arrow	Rotate Clockwise
Up Arrow	Thrust
Spacebar	Fire
Shift	Shields
H	Hyperspace
F3	Pause

Displays

Along the right and bottom of the main game area are displayed various status indicators which help keep you informed of the progress of the game and the state of your ship.

Your current score is displayed in the upper right corner.

Below the score display are three colored gauges which track the energy level of your ship.

The red gauge labeled "E" tracks your Engines energy level.

The green gauge labeled "W" tracks your Weapons energy level.

The blue gauge labeled "S" tracks your Shields energy level.

You will notice these gauges falling and rising as you use the various systems and they recover. If any gauge falls to zero, then that system will be temporarily unavailable until enough time has passed to allow it to recharge.

The number of remaining ships is displayed just below the energy gauges, and the current wave is displayed below that.

The bottom status panel is the message display. Messages will appear informing you of which particular bonus you've collected, the wave variations in effect, etc. At the end of each wave it will also display a marksmanship rating which describes your shooting accuracy - it is a ratio between the total number of shots fired and the number of hits scored. You can expect your marksmanship rating to go down if you have multiple guns enabled - since there will be more total bullets fired there will also probably be more misses.

Waves

The game consists of a series of "waves" of asteroids which you must destroy. After you have destroyed all of the asteroids of one wave, the next wave will begin. Each wave gets a little more difficult: a few more asteroids to destroy, shorter lifespan of bonuses, earlier appearance of aliens, more aggressive aliens. This will continue indefinitely - there is no practical upper limit on the number of waves.

Some waves are "special" and will be indicated as such by a message in the bottom status panel.

Every 3rd Wave : [FAST ROCKS] - all rocks start out with slightly higher than average velocity

Every 4th Wave : [BABY ROCKS] - instead of starting with a few big rocks, the wave starts with many small rocks

Every 5th Wave : [JUST MINERS] - every alien that appears will be a miner

Every 11th Wave : [BONUS-O-RAMA] - every rock you shoot will release a bonus item

The special waves can combine their effect - for example, on the 12th wave both [FAST ROCKS] and [BABY ROCKS] will occur, on the 44th wave both [BABY ROCKS] and [BONUS-O-RAMA] will occur, etc.

Bonuses

As the asteroids are destroyed, they occasionally release a colorful diamond - shaped bonus item which you can collect. You must fly your ship over a bonus in order to collect it. They only remain visible for a short time, so if you want that bonus you'd better chase it down right away!

The tricky thing about bonuses is that some are "good" and some are "bad" and you never know what you'll get until you pick one up. The rules of probability dictate that no matter which bonus you want, you'll undoubtedly find something else. However, you'll still want to hunt through as many bonuses as you can, since every once in a while one of them (at random, from any of the three categories) might be an extra ship!

Engine Bonuses (red):

These items affect the behaviour of your engines and the physics applied to your ship. This includes the rate of engine recharge, the maximum energy level, the friction applied to your ship, the auto-braking system, recoil dampers, etc.

Weapon Bonuses (green):

These items affect your weapons. This includes single / double / triple fire, the range of the weapons, rate of weapon recharge, maximum energy level, speed of projectiles, side guns, tail gun, etc.

Shield Bonuses (blue):

These items affect your shields. This includes the rate of shield recharge, maximum energy level, whether or not the shields destroy asteroids they contact, whether the shields repulse asteroids they contact, etc.

Enemies

All of the aliens in YAAC are actively aggressive. That is, they will hunt you, as opposed to just floating across the screen in random patterns. A dextrous combination of firing and shields will usually defeat them without too much trouble however. Aliens only appear once the wave is almost completely cleared of asteroids. If you just hang out at the end of the wave searching for aliens you'll find 'em! In fact, the longer you hang out, the more they'll gang up on you.

Wimpy: This is the less aggressive alien. Its ship is slightly slower and less maneuverable than your own. It has a moderate weapons load but it is not a very good shot. It becomes gradually more aggressive in later waves.

Hefty: This is the more aggressive alien. Its ship is generally faster and more maneuverable than your own (although your collection of bonuses may alter this balance). It has a heavy weapons load and is a pretty good shot. If you see one of these guys, run! It will not appear until after the first few waves, (unless you hang around a long time at the end of a wave) and will gradually become even more aggressive in later waves.

Miner: This alien does not shoot at you directly, rather it drops mines behind it, hoping that you'll run into one of them. Its typical strategy is to approach you straight on, then reverse course while dropping a load of mines - making it difficult to follow them for the kill. It may also just drop long sweeping lines of mines, creating a barrier of sorts. The mines linger around for quite a while before dissipating, and are just as deadly as other enemy weapons.

The Menus

The menus allow you to load and save games, control the appearance of the game window, adjust various graphical and sound-related options, find help on using the program, as well as many other tasks.

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Game Menu

New - Begins a new game starting with wave #1.

Open - Opens a previously saved game and begins play.

Save - Saves the current game with its current filename. If you have not yet saved your game you will be prompted for a filename.

Save As - Saves the current game, prompting you for a filename.

Pause - Suspends the game.

Quit - Quits the current game and returns to the title screen.

High Scores - Allows you to view the current high score roster.

Exit - Exits the program.

Window Menu

Normal Size - While you may resize the game window to any size you like, the game runs best at its "native" resolution. At this resolution, Windows doesn't have to scale the display, resulting in much better graphics performance. You may select the Normal Size item from the Window Menu to return the game window to its default size. (This is the display mode the game defaults to.)

Half Size - This is mainly for those Windows 3.x users who insist on playing the game without WinG installed. It's possible, that with the smaller screen area, even though it has to be scaled, you will get acceptable results from Windows 3.x without WinG. The downside is that the display will be severely distorted.

Correct Aspect - This item may be used to correct the aspect ratio of any arbitrarily sized window. Aspect Correction will assure that the game window is "square" - not flattened out or stretched like a funhouse mirror - but still lets you pick any size you like and that your PC will support.

Options Menu

Music / Sound - This item displays the Music and Sound dialog box where you may individually turn on or off either sound or music, or adjust the volume.

Cheats - This item displays the Cheats dialog box where you can alter the characteristics of the game. These cheats are essentially the same parameters which are modified as you collect bonuses, thus the Cheats dialog box is really just a method of manually acquiring the bonus items. For example, if you'd rather not run out of engine energy and have the engines available at all times, simply increase the engine recharge rate to maximum - the engines will recharge faster than you can deplete them, thus will remain charged constantly.

Note that any changes you make **ONLY** affect the game currently in progress. If you start a new game all settings will return to their default values.

The author cautions you against cheating **TOO** much! Sure you can turn on all the guns and boost your recharge rates to maximum, then you can just sit in the middle of the screen with fire+rotate pressed and perform the "Death Blossom" maneuver forever -- but where's the challenge in that!?

The following options allow you to turn off some of the animation in order to improve performance. Especially if you're really good at the game and you make it up to level 30 or beyond, you may not want the screen cluttered with all this extra nonsense. Or maybe you just find the extra animation distracting.

Draw Thrust - Enables or disables the drawing of little thrust particles behind ships as they apply thrusters.

Draw Fireballs - Enables or disables the drawing of the fireball explosion whenever something is destroyed.

Draw Shrapnel - Enables or disables the drawing of little shrapnel particles whenever something is destroyed.

Draw Status - Enables or disables the update of the status frame area surrounding the game area. This can be somewhat confusing, but can improve performance on slower PC's.

Draw Starfield - Enables or disables the drawing of the background star field.

Help Menu

Contents - Displays this help file.

Registration - Allows you to enter your "magic word" which unlocks the registered features of the program.

About - Displays version and copyright information.

Troubleshooting

The most likely source of trouble is probably going to be the sound system. YAAC uses a Microsoft add-on called "WAVEMIX" to produce sound. This product is fairly CPU-intensive, and you may notice drop-outs or choppy sound on slower PC's. You can try fiddling with the settings in WAVEMIX.INI, although this usually doesn't have much effect. Not much else I can do about that if it happens - you can either live with it, or turn off sound completely, or try turning off some of the graphics in the game to free up your CPU for sound chores.

If you don't hear music, or can't adjust the music volume, check that you have the latest set of drivers for your sound card. YAAC is unable to control the volume on some sound cards with older drivers (the AWE32 is an example), and if the volume is already low you might not hear music at all. Note that the AWE32 works fine if the latest drivers are installed.

The graphics in the game should be acceptable with Windows 3.x on a 486-33Mhz ***IF*** you have Win/G properly installed. If you are using Windows 3.x and the graphics are NOT acceptable, then either your PC is too slow to run YAAC (sorry), or Win/G is not properly installed. Win/G is not necessary for Windows 95.

Revision History

YAAC began as a DOS program, just for the heck of it. It was a programming toy, nothing more. Gradually, a few more features were added that almost made it seem playable, but it was never intended to be a "real" game. Then Windows came along, and I wanted a project to test the waters with. So YAAC became a Windows program. Then more time passed, and a few more features were added. Finally it almost seemed playable, but was still a long way from being a "real" game. Realizing that I'd never actually "finish" the darned thing, I figured I'd release it as freeware. Well, that was version 1.0. To my surprise, after releasing it I found myself wishing that it had been more finished. Thus was born version 1.1, which makes up for a lot of the shortcomings of 1.0.

04/96 Version 1.0 released as freeware. First public release.

08/96 Version 1.1 released as shareware. Started begging for money.

- Added new rock graphics.

- Changed fireball graphics.

- Added Miner alien.

- Added wave variations.

- Added side guns weapon bonus.

- Added tail gun weapon bonus.

- Changed enemy weapon color.

- Renamed File menu to Game.

- Added Save As to Game menu.

- Better enemy difficulty increase above wave 20.

- Many settings now stored in YAAC.INI and retained between runs.

- Added sound & music.

- Added Draw Starfield option.

- Added high scores.

- Added recoil damper engine bonus.

- Added repulsor shields bonus.

Collisions now occur with enemies (oops! <g>). Thus you can use your destructo shields (or repulsor shields) against an enemy, you can also die if you crash into one without the shields activated.

- Added cheats dialog.

- Added help file.

- Added marksmanship rating.

While keyboard customization hasn't yet been added within the program itself, it IS possible to customize the keyboard by directly editing the [Keyboard] section of the YAAC.INI file. (The YAAC.INI file will be found in your \windows directory.) However, this requires that you know the virtual key codes used by Windows to identify each key - most people don't, and I mention it only for those who are curious.

A note about the sound files: if you wish to replace the sound files with your own custom sounds, feel free to. The files are standard .WAV files as used by Windows. They should be 8-bit, 11khz sound files, and must not exceed 64k bytes in size.

