Send Cash To Starbase

Clicking on this animated icon sends all the credits that are in the treasuries of all your colonies back to Starbase almost instantaneously. If a war is raging, it's worth popping back to the Government Screen as often as you can, just to do this – if the enemy's army conquers one of your colonies you lose everything there: you might be able to rescue some cash!
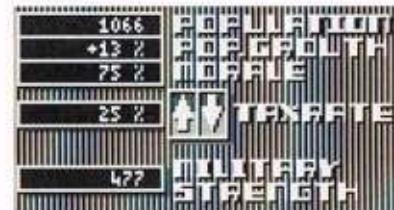
Monitoring Resource Levels

The Resources Display reveals the current stocks of Food, Minerals, Fuel and Energy on the planet under examination. The displays update dynamically – that is, while you watch. The figure in the Food meter, for instance, jumps up once per day of Gametime if you have one or more active Horticultural Stations on the surface, then jumps down as the population removes its Food ration for the period. If levels get too low or drop to zero you need to take remedial action. Further details on managing Resources appear on page 87.

Population and Military Garrison

People are very useful. You can use them to crew ships and fight wars if you transport them back to Starbase, or you can raise money from a colony by taxing the population. The population display reveals the current number of people on a planet, the rate at which the population is growing, the morale of the people and the tax rate you have applied.

All other things being equal, population growth is a function of morale, which in turn is a function of the tax rate. Clicking on the up/down arrows next to the tax rate display allows you to set a tax rate, between 0% and 100%. Further details on managing population appear on page 87.

When a colony is established, it has a military strength rating of 0. Platoons can only be trained, equipped and commissioned on Starbase – but once that has been achieved, you can ship them out to garrison a colony or to attack a planet under enemy control. Once Platoons have disembarked from a Battle Cruiser, then their military strength is added to your military strength on that planet. Further details on the factors that affect the combat ability of your Platoons appears in the Mission Background section on page 82.

Locating Craft

SHIPS ON SURFACE OF STARBASE!

Craft may be orbiting a planet, sitting on one of the six platforms on its surface, or be parked in one of its three docking bays. Clicking on the appropriate overview icon reveals what is currently where – unless you have more than six craft in orbit around the current planet, in which case the first six to arrive are shown in the display windows.

Shortcuts

These three icons offer a quick route to other Control Screens – use them to avoid returning to the Main Screen first.

BUY SCREEN

Your one-stop-shop for ships and equipment. This is where you come to buy an Atmosphere Processor, a Solar Satellite Generator, a Battle Cruiser, a Mining Station, a Horticultural Station or a Cargo Cruiser. Flip through the screens by clicking on the left or right arrows until something catches your fancy... or return to the Main Screen by clicking on the right mouse button.

The status panel at the foot of each of the six flip screens identifies the item on offer, shows its price and gives you a summary of the Resources you currently have on Starbase. Sufficient Credits are all you need to make a purchase if you are fighting in the Hitotsu system; Credits and Minerals are used to pay for goods you want in the Futatsu System; Credits, Minerals and Energy are required in Mittsu and Yottsu.

Goods are not manufactured – they are sent from your home universe Epsilon the moment you return appropriate payment through the hyperspace gate by clicking on the 'BUY' button on a screen in the catalogue. You must have enough Resources in store on Starbase to make the payment in order to make a purchase. Delivery can only be made if you have a vacant Docking Bay on Starbase to receive a craft and the purchase must not take your fleet size over the 32-craft maximum. Click on 'Buy' if you want to purchase the piece of kit that is currently on display.

Before confirming a purchase, by clicking the right mouse button, you have the opportunity to type in a new name for the piece of equipment by pressing BACKSPACE and entering the new name, which can contain up to eight characters. Press ENTER or the right mouse button to confirm the new name. The

default name uses the class as the first part of an identifier, eg 'Farming', and a number. If you already have four Horticultural Stations and go to buy another, the default name will be 'Farming 5.'

You can only run one Atmosphere Processor at a time – you can only buy another one if the enemy captures your first unit.

During the course of play, technological advances will be made by your scientists and natural disasters will occur in the system. Both can affect the operational capabilities of the craft in your fleet, or affect the specifications of craft that will be shipped from Epsilon next time you make a purchase.

What Does What...

The **Atmosphere Processor** is a truly sophisticated piece of technology. It requires no crew, and runs on nuclear energy which it generates for itself. If you send it to a neutral, unformatted planet that is incapable of supporting life, the Atmosphere Processor can create population-friendly conditions on the planet surface. A newly-formatted planet will also be seeded with a quantity of Food, Minerals, Fuel, Energy and people as well as the basic installations such as Docking Bays needed to run a colony. For more details, see the Planet Formatting description page 66.
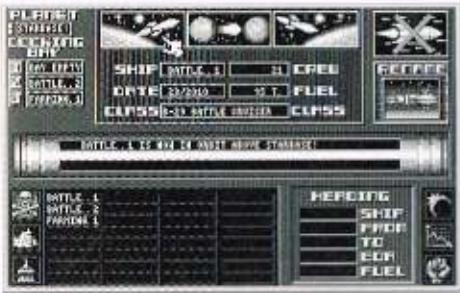
A **Solar Satellite Generator**, like the Atmosphere Processor, is nuclear powered and runs automatically. When it is orbiting a planet, it generates Energy which is beamed down to the planet surface and placed into storage.

A **Battle Cruiser** can carry limited amounts of cargo and a large number of civilian passengers, but its prime purpose is moving Platoons. Up to four Platoons can be accommodated in its on-board barracks. At the start of a game, Battle Cruisers require Fuel to travel between planets.

A **Horticultural Station**, like a **Mining Station**, has to be crewed, placed on the surface of a planet and activated before it serves its purpose. As might be expected, an operational Horticultural Station creates Food which is passed into the host planet's stores, while a Mining Station creates Minerals and Fuel. These Resource-generating Units can travel between planets, providing you supply them with Fuel, and they can carry small amounts of cargo on the journey.

A **Cargo Cruiser** is well-suited to deep space operations. It requires a crew and Fuel to become operational, and can lug large quantities of people, Fuel, Energy, Minerals and Food between planets. At the start of the game, Cargo Cruisers require Fuel to travel between planets.

Further details on the attributes and uses of each of the six craft appear in the Glossary on page 12.

NAVIGATION SCREEN

This screen allows you to control the movement of craft in your fleet around the planet system. Only craft that have been crewed and are in orbit above planets, in transit between planets or waiting in a Docking Bay on a planet under your control can be accessed from this screen.

From the Navigation Screen, you can issue four orders to a captain who is in a position to accept them: launch from a Docking Bay into orbit; leave planetary orbit and travel to another planet assuming orbit on arrival; land from orbit and enter a vacant Docking Bay; or terminate space travel immediately and begin orbiting the nearest planet.

At the top left, you are shown the name of the current planet and the names of any craft that are in the three Docking Bays on the planet. To launch a ship from a Docking Bay, click on its name to alert its captain.

The names of all the craft in your fleet appear in the 32-cell grid at the bottom of the screen. To issue a command to the captain of one of your craft that is not in the Docking Bay of the current planet, click on its name in the main fleet list to alert the captain.

Once a captain has been alerted, his ship becomes the current ship to which you issue orders – providing it is available for service. The central read-out will inform you if the ship is awaiting a crew, has insufficient Fuel to under-

take the voyage you have chosen for it, or is sitting on the surface of a planet and cannot be launched. You may have to move to other Control Screens to remedy these problems, and return here to re-issue your orders.

When you have alerted a captain by clicking on the name of the ship he commands, details of his craft appear in the central control window, and in the Heading panel once you have issued your order.

Launch Into Orbit If the craft is in a Docking Bay and has been selected as the current craft, click here to launch it into orbit – the first stage in making a journey through space.

Journey To Planet If the craft is currently in orbit and has been selected as the current craft, click here to assign a destination. The fleet roster panel will be replaced by a list of planet names – click on the name of the planet you want to select as the destination.

Land From Orbit Click here to land a craft, bringing it down into a vacant Docking Bay on the surface of the planet it is orbiting.

Abort Mission Click here to abort an interplanetary journey. The captain will put his ship into orbit around the nearest planet.

When you click on one of the Navigation Screen's command icons, the central message window gives you a report. If you want to know the whereabouts and EDA (Estimated Date of Arrival) of another craft, click on its name in the fleet roster and the details will appear here.

Once you have clicked on a ship's name to make it the current ship, you have the option to rename it. Click on the Rename Icon and you have the opportunity to type in a new name for the current craft by pressing BACKSPACE and entering the new name, which can contain up to eight characters. Press ENTER or the right mouse button to confirm your choice. This facility is useful in the more advanced games, where you can capture abandoned enemy craft which invariably have unintelligible names.

Shortcuts
These icons offer a quick route to other Control Screens – use them to avoid returning to the Main Screen first.
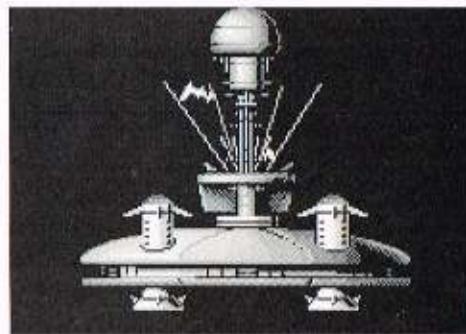
PLANET FORMATTING

When you enter a planet system for the first time, there are only two habitable planets – Starbase, and your enemy's base. All the other planets are neutral, and cannot support life. They are unformatted and 'Lifeless!' appears in the planet name panel on the Video Window when you move the Planet Cursor over an unformatted planet in the System Map.

Some very sophisticated equipment is available to remedy this situation – you can buy an Atmosphere Processor, which can be sent to an unformatted planet on autopilot and used to make conditions there amenable to sentient life. Unlike all your other craft, which are launched from the Navigation Screen, the Atmosphere Processor is launched from the Main Screen, and unlike the other craft it lands on and launches from the surface of a planet rather than from a Docking Bay. It will only do its job on an unformatted planet – so don't try re-formatting live colonies...

The Planet Cursor in the System Map is used to select a destination planet for the Atmosphere Processor – then clicking on the Planet Formatting Icon programs the unit to make the journey to that planet and start doing its job. A message to this effects appears in the Message Window; just click the right mouse button to confirm at this stage – you can rename a planet when it has formatted, by accessing the Government Screen and using the Rename Icon.

When a planet has completed formatting, an incoming message will advise you of the fact. If you return to the Main Screen and select the planet with the Planet Cursor, you can discover the nature of the new territory that has just been added to your empire by taking a look in the Video Window.

Planet Types

Volcanic Horticultural Stations and Solar Satellites work here, but the real gains are made if you set up mining operations. A basic Mining Station produces five times the yield of Minerals and three times the yield of Fuel on a volcanic planet as it does on any other planet type. Those yields may be further increased by technological breakthroughs.

Desert Farming and Mining operations proceed at normal, basic rates but the Energy yield from orbiting Solar Satellites is much increased owing to the thin atmosphere that cloaks Desert planets – very little Energy is lost when it is beamed down to the planet's capacitor storage devices.

Tropical Normal, basic yields are obtained from Mining Stations and Solar Satellites, but as might be expected, you get significantly more Food from a Horticultural Station when it is installed on a Tropical planet as it utilizes some of the local flora and fauna in the production of Food. Yields from Horticultural Stations may be further increased by technological breakthroughs.

Metropolis Starbase is a Metropolis planet. These planets are good revenue earners – the quantity of Credits per unit of time you receive from setting a given tax rate on a given size of population is much higher on a Metropolis planet than on any other planet type.