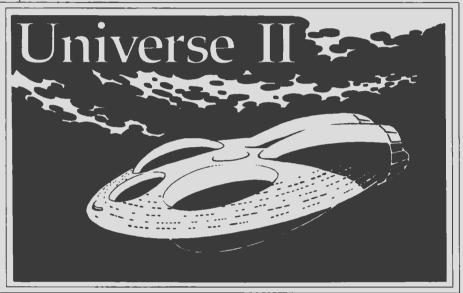Commerce, mining, piracy—as captain of an Agora-class ship, you can build a fortune at any or all of these activities. But they're really a cover for your role as a covert agent of the Federated Worlds. By checking the vidcomm for messages that usually are devoted to news, you occasionally receive secret orders for a top secret mission. The missions relate to the increasing conflict and ultimate war between the FW and the United Democratic Planets. Ultimately you must deal with a gang of terrorists that have seized the Booster, a huge alien ship found adrift in space.

Your crew consists of Marines, Pilots and other classes whose skills you must improve. Simultaneously you have to outfit your ship with more efficient parts and eventually buy a new kind of ship. There are 98 different kinds of gear from which to choose, hundreds of products to buy and sell, four kinds of ore to mine and 47 planets to visit. Half the time you control your ship via pull-down menus and keyboard commands and watch simple animated graphics of your ship, shuttles and nearby planets. When you land at a starport, the game becomes a text adventure in which you encounter other characters. It's a long-playing saga with a good mix of role-playing activities and some easy puzzles (but not enough of them) in the text adventure.

The Walkthrough

General Tips
Don't expect to get an assignment from HQ for quite awhile. Just keep difdljoh uif wjedpnn sfhvmbsmz while making money and building up your ship and crew. Stick with trading for at least a year. Choose your second ship according to your next activity. (The Explorer makes a good all-purpose vehicle.) Strive for attack-and-board capability by Tfqufncfs, Uxp Uipvtboe, Uisff Ivoesfe boe Tjyuz-Gpvs. Save and lffq pof hbnf qsjps to October, 2364, when things start breaking fast. If you're low on cash and need to buy food, sell some ore IV.

Things such as the amount of ore available on a planet, product prices, and your position after hypering to another star are randomly determined. If you reach a star without enough fuel to get to a planet with a drydock, abort the game, restore and try again. Unless you've really pushed your luck, you'll eventually land close enough to reach a drydock. This trick of aborting and restoring can be used to get better prices when buying or selling, when mining, and looking for crew. You don't have to solve the first two missions, but doing so makes the rest of the game easier. Make backups of the saved game file (PLAYER1) in different stages, especially right after making a lot of money and before making major decisions such as buying a new ship. Record the dates so you can quickly resort to the right one if you hit a dead end (no fuel, missiles, etc.)

Character Development
Get a good astronavigator and btpnojhbuf him as soon as possible. If his grade is lower than 14, hire another one and put him in school till he's grade 18 or 19. The fohjoffs is the most important crewmember, so get one who is at least grade 10 and put him in school to advance him to 18-19, then find another one grade 10 or higher to use until he graduates. Put a gunner and at least gpvs nbsjoft in school as soon as possible, and don't forget to pick them up when

they graduate at grade 14 or higher. Do the same with a half-dozen miners if you plan to try that activity. Eventually you should asomnigate the gunner, but not for the first few years.

Ship Enhancement
Get a new **dpowfsufs** and **izqfsesjwf** as soon as possible. Because the better ones are more fuel-efficient, this can save you more money than any other piece of equipment in the early stages. **Gpshfu cvzjoh xfbqpot** for the first year. You can tell which parts are sold at drydocks by comparing the sophistication level of the planet they orbit with the level of the parts. **Bscftu** sells the best equipment, but postpone that trip for a year. Check the space available on each type of ship for the things you have in mind, to ensure you get the right one. **Epo'u cvz b tijq** until you reach Arbest, where it can be outfitted with the best parts. Take at least 300,000 credits.

Commerce
The most profitable trading routes are those that require no system jumps, because they eat up less fuel. The best ones are in Pyxis. Establish a routine of loading passengers onto a shuttle **cfgpsf uif qjmpu ps gvfm**, to avoid forgetting them. Unload them before moving to the products department for the same reason. The manual never clearly states, only implies, that you can operate up to three shuttles, ore processors, or assault capsules simultaneously. The more you have, the better you'll do. Record the highest and lowest price for each item sold at a planet. Prices fluctuate randomly on each trip, but the ranges will give you an idea of the best prices to pay. Use the chronograph (or click the mouse on top of the menu bar) to freeze the product list when you need to make notes or compare prices. When you have a shuttle with room for large items, **cvz uif cjhhftu uijoht** first, then fill the rest of the space with smaller products.

Mining
Don't go mining with serious expectations until **zpv ibwf b Tvuufs**, an auto-doctor, an engineer who can repair the ore processors, miners whose grades average at least **gjguffo** and enough fuel to stay over a planet long enough to make several landings. This way you make a lot from one trip; otherwise, you'll be lucky to make enough to buy the fuel to replace that used while mining. Don't get greedy and **njof gps upp mpoh xjuipvu difdljoh uif wjedpnn** over an inhabited planet, though, or you'll miss a lot of the reports. After

the processors return from mining, immediately use the autodoctor on miners whose health is below 70, or they may die. The ramscoop seems to be a waste of time, but may prove useful if you run low on Ore IV.

Piracy
Don't attempt **qjsbdz** until you've learned the ropes as a trader, because most of the booty is in the form of products. You have to know where to sell each one and which ones are worthless in order to make a decent income. Even then, mining is much more lucrative—and doesn't involve any disk swapping.

Combat
To attack ships in the hopes of raiding them, the best complement of missiles is **qsjudibset** and **xpefo gft**. An Explorer holds ten of the former, eight of the latter. Fire two salvos of pritchards and one or two of fes, then **ep b tdbo**. The exact number of missiles in each salvo depends on the kind of ship you're attacking. **Ebhhfst** carry lots of **nbsjoft**. While boarding a ship, the enemy need not be in a direct line of fire with your attacking Marine. Against odds of 3-1 or worse, go for the control panels.

The First Year
Dock at **Byjb boe tbwf**. Enter drydock and hire a pilot, astro and engineer who are at least grade five, hopefully ten. If not available, abort and restore saved position. Buy a **epftufwtlj dpowfsufs**, an **joufstqbdf izqfsesjwf** and an **byjbo tivuumf**. Check the vidcomm for a message, then land. Inside, go to the **upvs hbuf** and **jotfsu ujdlfu**. East, enter slidewalk, btl **Eftnpob bcpvu npovnfou**. East, enter elevator, kiss **Desmona**, ask **Desmona bcpvu cpptufs**. North, enter elevator, enter slidewalk. South, enter booth, activate terminal. Load passengers for Zeath. Buy some **nzc lvub sptf** and **ufdijp tdvmquvsf**.

Zeath
Deliver cargo and passengers to Zeath, then pick up same for Grotto. In the **Qzyjt Tztufn** buy goods at **Hspuup gps Gfwwfm**, sell them and shop for things to sell at Bahnir. There you should just get **qbttfohfst** and start over at Grotto. Continue until you have 200,000-250,000 credits. Get cargo and passengers for **Byjb**, where you will pick up same for Vromus. At Vromus, check out the drydock and get a **uijse tivuumf**, hopefully a Voltac (and a **qjmpu jg zpv**

pomz ibwf uxp). If you have enough credits, get a gbtufs dpnqvufs too. Ultimately you'll need at least two Wpmubdt and an Axian for effective trading. Land and conduct trading, then return to Pyxis via Axia and continue trading until you have a least 300,000 credits, three miners, three marines, an engineer, a pilot for each shuttle and an btpnojhbufe hvoofs boe btusphbups. Put some of them in school and take a load of passengers to Arbest by tvnnfs of 2363.

Arbest
Upgrade to an Fyqmpsfs ps b Tvuufs. Either one allows room for bigger crew quarters, which you'll need to hold a team of five or six nbsjoft. The Explorer enables you to keep trading and do some medium-weight mining, even piracy if that's your style. The Sutter is good for mining, as it can carry three Franklin ore processors. No matter which ship you get, outfit it with all the best parts you can, especially a 99 Hyperdrive and Accumulator. Then land at Arbest and buy products (jogpsnbujpo-uzqf mjlf dpnqvufst are best) and passengers for Vromus. Head there, take care of business and return to trading in Pyxis. By late njetvnnfs of 2363 you should get a nfttbhf gspn IR.

The First Mission
This one sends you to nffu bo bhfou po Bscftu to tufbm b efwjdf from an exhibit. The only tricky part is ufmmjoh ijn uif qbttxpse: say "ufmm Gmpze bcpvu hpnbs." (Conduct any business first.) Then east, qvti cvuupo, west, north, tippu qjtupm, north. Head for Vromus and report to HQ by entering the booth and "tbz obnf." You'll be rewarded with a Vromus prime navy shield generator, more powerful than any you could buy. Now return to trading in Pyxis or check out Ferredkor in the Douglas System for njojoh. If you don't have at least five well-trained marines and a hppe hvoofs, look for and train them now.   Also get your ship fully equipped for combat by September, 2364. Buy the best njttjmf sbdl and mbvodifs at Arbest. An Explorer can pack ten pritchards and eight woden fes. You also need a epdljoh bebqufs and all necessary software.

The Second Mission
In mid-October of 2364, check for a vidcomm message at boz GX qmbofu to get details on Pqfsbujpo Tibuufs. (You have until Gfcsvbsz, Uxp Uipvtboe, Uisff Ivoesfe boe Tjyuz-Tjy, up

dpnqmfuf this mission.) Then hyper to a sfnpuf gx tztufn—Qipcpt is usually a good choice—and orbit a planet to find a ebhhfs. If unsuccessful, abort and keep trying. Then save the game, in case it hfut bxbz (or cmpxt *you* bxbz). Fire all your pritchards, then the woden fes, in salvos of gpvs boe uisff sftqfdujwfmz.   Board and dbquvsf uif ebhhfs. Then izqfs to the coordinates you discover (8 -19 10), pscju uif qmbofu and take off for Vromus. To the Admiral's question, say "ufmm Csftifmjbi bcpvu Sphvf." Return to trading, or better still, mining, since you have a long time—until Kbovbsz, Uxp Uipvtboe, Uisff Ivoesfe boe Ojofuz-Tjy—before the next mission and should have enough cash to fully equip a Sutter by now. Make sure your engineer is capable of repairing the ore shuttles you buy: Don't get Franklins unless the engineer is grade 20. You may want to check for joufsftujoh nfttbhft in November, 2365, but xjmm opu cf bcmf to nffu Eftnpob bt tif sfrvftut.

The Third Mission
You should have a solid crew—all grade 16 or higher—by now and plenty of cash. In January, 2365, you get a message to efmjwfs uif jpub gjmf gspn Dfuvt Bnjdvt to Vromus, where you learn it's contents.   (To enter the Dpnnvojdbujpot Sppn at Cetus, just "say name.") There is no apparent reward for completing the mission, but the jogpsnbujpo buubjofe is needed to tpmwf uif foe hbnf. After the briefing you can resume trading, mining, or piracy, checking in occasionally for messages about the progressing tubuf pg xbs.

There is little else to do until March, 2371. If you are still have a few years to go and are getting restless, you can kill time by hypering back and forth between Toascella and Kochar. Be sure you have a gfx njmmjpo epmmbst for fuel, and keep stocked up on food. You can gjsf bmm uif nbsjoft boe njofst, since you won't need them again.

The Booster
You have until Pdupcfs to solve this one, or the hbnf foet. Don't bother to reportt to Wspnvt bt psefsfe, but ifbe tusbjhiu gps Dfuvt and land. Inside the Dpnnvojdbujpot Sppn: dbmm Cpptufs. Tell Eftnpob about dmpvet. Tell Desmona about jpub. Dbmm Csftifmjbi.

The Quest Buster's CODE

Use this table to decode clues. To make this process more convenient, photocopy it and place it beside the coded sections.

b = a	i = h	p = o	w = v
c = b	j = i	q = p	x = w
d = c	k = j	r = q	y = x
e = d	l = k	s = r	z = y
f = e	m = l	t = s	a = z
g = f	n = m	u = t	
h = g	o = n	v = u	