

VORTEX

For the C-64

By Sean Wagle

The Vortex is a projection of another universe into our own, surrounded by protective tiles. Alien creatures spiral out of it from a reverse vortex in their own universe. The task of the game player is to avoid the aliens, get through the tile barriers, and close this "gap" in space.

Enter *Vortex* (page 134) using *Ahoy!*'s *Flankspeed* machine language entry program (page 111). To run *Vortex*, type SYS 49152. After a short pause (drawing sprites, setting up data tables), the title screen will appear. Select a skill level and begin by pressing fl or f3.

Your ship will appear at the bottom left corner, traveling left. Joystick left rotates the ship counterclockwise; joystick right rotates it clockwise. The fire button releases a missile in the direction the ship is facing. Holding the fire button stops the ship's motion. When the button is released, the ship resumes moving. (Notice that the ship can still rotate while stopped.) The ship can scroll around the screen from any side and reappear on the opposite side.

The Vortex is the flashing dot in the center of the screen. The object of the game is to shoot through the tiles that protect it and hit the Vortex itself. On the novice skill level, each shot can remove a tile. On the expert level, the strength of the tiles and Vortex is increased and it takes many more hits to complete the mission.

The aliens can be shot, but that will only send an alien back into the Vortex. Because the Vortex is one-way, the alien must come back out again. This means that when an alien is hit while it is attempting to leave the Vortex, it is simply held at bay while the Vortex is protected. For this reason, the Vortex must be hit when no aliens are emerging from it.

You lose one of your three ships if it hits an alien, or if it runs into the tiles. Lose all three and the game ends.

There are 18 levels in *Vortex*. When the Vortex is destroyed, the player is given a new Vortex of a different color with faster aliens, as well as different sound effects for a hit on a tile. When the 18th Vortex is destroyed, the game cycles back to level one. At first this may seem difficult, but I have done it even on expert level.

The best strategy is to protect your ship, and fire at the Vortex only when opportune. Be ready to move when the aliens get too close. It is easy to let one's attention become too concentrated on the Vortex, when the real danger is from the aliens circling in from behind. Also, be aware that the aliens, like yourself, can scroll around the screen, so trying to "hide" offscreen or on a border is not necessarily safer than fighting in the open.

Scoring is as follows:

	Novice	Expert
Alien	1 point	1 point
Tile	10 points	10 points
Vortex	10 points	10 points
Completed level	100 x level	200 x level

These keys have the following functions:

fl=Begin game (Novice)

f3=Begin game (Expert)

LOCK=Pause game

When fl or f3 is pressed with CTRL or SHIFT, the rotation of the ship alternates between fast or slow for the next game. ☐ SEE PROGRAM LISTING ON PAGE 134

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