

Light Cycles 3D

2017 Preface



Here is an unexpected discovery for the 40th anniversary of the launch of the Apple II - an original game from 1977. You may have thought that Lemonade Stand and Little BrickOut were the titles to show off the capabilities of the Apple II. This, Light Cycles 3D, was the game that was supposed to ship with the computer but was pulled at the last minute for unknown reasons. We discovered the cassette tape, hidden in the archives of the developer. The binary program was copied onto a floppy and a simple loader (and updated init screen) was added to show off this gem from a bygone era. What follows is a scan of the original instructions. Enjoy what could have been,

The 8-Bit Bunch
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P.S. If you notice keypresses aren't being recognized, make sure CAPS LOCK is down - there was only upper case on the original Apple][.

Light Cycles 3D

Introduction:

Light Cycles 3D is a game to introduce the new Apple II Computer from the Apple Computer Corporation. This game uses the full color graphics mode and the game paddles to provide an interactive experience. The game is best viewed on a color television. An R.F. modulator is available from your computer dealer to help connect your Apple computer to a T.V.

Light Cycles are like motorcycles of light that exist in an arena inside the computer. The arena is a 64x64 grid of tiles. As the Light Cycles travel over tiles, the tiles take on the color of the Cycle. The trail of tiles left behind the Light Cycle slowly dissipates and return to the clear grid color (blue and grey). If a Light Cycle runs over a tile that isn't clear, it will de-rez and the other Cycle will win. If a Light Cycle drives off the grid (into black), the Cycle will also de-rez. It is possible for both Light Cycles to de-rez concurrently, in which case a draw will be called. In more advanced arenas, there are holes in the grid that show up as black. Hitting them will de-rez the Light Cycle, too. You will have to develop a strategy to force your opponent into crashing into a blocked tile. Speed is set at a constant, but there is a limited turbo boost that can double speed for a short time. Use it sparingly.

Options Screen:

Options for game play are selected at startup and between games. The screen will look like:

PADDLES: ENABLE

ARENA: BASIC

PLAYER 1: HUMAN
PLAYER 2: HUMAN

START GAME:

SHORT TRAIL
MEDIUM TRAIL
LONG TRAIL

The keys that change options are:

- P - toggle paddle usage (it will default to enable if paddles found at startup)
- A - cycle through available arena maps
- 1 - select human or computer for player 1
- 2 - select human or computer for player 2
- S - start game with short length trails
- M - start game with medium length trails
- L - start game with long length trails

Player Status Panel:

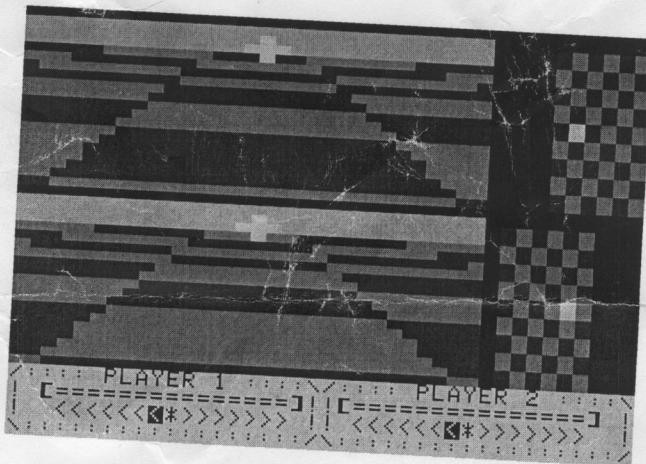
When the paddles are enabled for input, the player status panel will update with the paddle positions. The paddles are centered when the * is highlighted at the bottom gauge.

Each player has a small amount of boost available for use during the game. As the turbo is engaged, the boost gauge will show the remaining boost. The panel looks like:

```
/::: PLAYER 1 :::\::: PLAYER 2 :::\  
! [=====]!![=====]!  
! <<<<<*>>>>! <<<<<*>>>>!  
\.....^...../
```

Game Play:

When the game starts, the screen will look like:



The screen displays a split view of player 1 and player 2. Each player has a 3D first-person view and a top-down 2D view to the right. As the player moves through the arena, the 3D view will show the straight ahead view from the Light Cycle. The 2D view will show a 9x9 area around the player and will scroll around to keep the player centered in the view. The arena is surrounded by 4 walls - each of a different color. Pay attention to the background wall color and you will have an indication as to which direction you are facing.

Playing with paddles: Paddles allows high precision input so that turns can be gradual or sharp. Turbo is selected with the button on the paddle.

Playing with keyboard: Paddles must be disabled in the Options Screen to use the keyboard controls. Both players must use the keyboard. Turns are always 90 degrees at a time, unlike the paddle inputs.

Player 1

A - turn left 90 degrees
S - turbo toggle
D - turn right 90 degrees

Player 2

J - turn left 90 degrees
K - turbo toggle
L - turn right 90 degrees

Computer Opponent: A computer controlled Light Cycle always makes 90 degree turns, but it can quickly make decisions. It can be interesting to have two computer controlled Light Cycles play against each other.

During game play, the ESC key will pause the game until another key is pressed. Pressing the Q key during pause will force a draw and the game will end.

Sounds during play: You will hear the rhythm of the sound increase as the Light Cycles get closer together. If you hear a fast rhythm, the other Cycle is nearby. When engaging turbo boost, a high pitched sound will be heard indicating its engagement.

Conclusion:

Enjoy this exciting new technology. Personal computers, and the Apple II in particular, are leading the way to a bright future.