

= Fragile Allegiance =

Fragile Allegiance is an open @-@ ended 4X real @-@ time strategy (RTS) game from Gremlin Interactive , released in 1996 for MS @-@ DOS and Windows 95 . The game begins on May 25 , 2496 as the player begins their employment with TetraCorp (a large interstellar megacorporation) who have set up a new asteroid mining franchise operation in the Fragmented Sectors . There are six alien races competing with Tetracorp for these resources . Beginning with one building and one million credits , the player is tasked with building up a successful mining operation to sell as much ore as possible to the Federation . Diplomacy is crucial to the success or failure of this franchise operation as the players colonies begin to encroach on one another .

The game features complex diplomacy between players and includes real @-@ time lip @-@ synced animations for in @-@ game actors . Described as a combination of SimCity 2000 , Civilization and Risk , Fragile Allegiance uses an icon based GUI for all menus and game commands . Unlike other RTS games , there is no defined tech tree , with technology being unlocked by the purchase of 36 blueprints at any time during the course of the game . Fragile Allegiance is the spiritual successor to K240 and there are many similarities between the two .

Fragile Allegiance generally scored well with reviewers , with PC Gamer UK giving the game the Game of Distinction award and it was praised for its graphics , interface and sound . The game has problems running on Windows XP and later Windows versions , as it was designed for MS @-@ DOS and ported to Windows 95 .

= = Gameplay = =

Gameplay takes place in the Fragmented Sectors , an area of outer space filled with asteroids that are rich in mineral resources . The aim of the game is to colonise and mine the asteroids for the various ores found on them and then sell the ore to the Federation . The player can use the proceeds for empire expansion , purchasing new technologies , construction of buildings , ships and missiles , spying , trading and also to pay fines should the Federation impose any . Construction of the various missiles and ships requires quantities of different ores , so the decision to sell to the Federation is not straightforward . The game has a stock market where commodities can be bought and sold . There is also a black market offering unauthorised information regarding individual spies and colony supervisors , and illicit trade in rare ores and missiles . The manual states that any TetraCorp employee caught selling ore on the black market will be terminated .

Fragile Allegiance has a simplistic combat system with the player having no direct control over units when a fleet enters combat . Enemy asteroids can be attacked using ships , missiles and agents . During a battle , laser beams criss @-@ cross the screen and buildings catch fire before being destroyed . Ground turrets fire back at attacking ships and anti @-@ missile turrets shoot out incoming missiles .

Small ships are built in a ship yard while the larger ships require a space dock for construction . Ships range from the small Scoutship (used to discover new asteroids) , to the gigantic Command Cruiser (which is used for transporting combat fleets over vast distances that they would otherwise be unable to travel without refueling) . Each ship has a limited number of hardpoints to which weapons and other devices can be attached , and ships can be grouped together into fleets .

There are a total of seven races in the game , but only TetraCorp (representing the human race) is playable . Upon discovering an alien race , diplomacy can be initiated in order to arrange actions such as non @-@ aggression pacts and joint @-@ combat treaties , as well as accuse them of spying or trading with the Mauna (Trading with the Mauna is illegal under Federation law) . If a faction is found to be trading with the Mauna , Jane Fong (Federal minister for trade relations in addition to her role as Terran ambassador for the Fragmented Sectors) can be informed , who will in turn tell the Federation , which could result in increased hostility towards the offending faction from all others or , they can be threatened with blackmail and forced to pay a tribute in return for the players silence . Each race has a unique look and diplomatic strategies and everything happens in real time with highly detailed characters that are well animated and lip @-@ synced . One of the

factions ? The Mauna , are not members of the Federation and are unable to be negotiated or traded with . As the players empire expands , agents and supervisors will make themselves available for employment . Agents are used for gathering intelligence on alien asteroids and can also be deployed on the players own asteroids for counter @-@ intelligence . Other uses for agents include deploying APV 's and destroying various buildings such as defense installations , life support , production , and other various installations . The chances of an agent successfully completing their mission and escaping detection are increased if there is a spy satellite orbiting the asteroid they are assigned to . Colony Supervisors are able to be employed to help manage the building and maintenance of asteroid colonies . There is no research in the game , as this popular mechanic is replaced with the Sci @-@ Tek blueprint system which allows players to buy new technologies as needed . Multiplayer is available over an IPX network with TetraCorp being the only playable race .

= = Plot = =

The player begins the game as the latest recruit to TetraCorps mining franchise operation and is tasked with selling as much ore as possible to the Federation , which is a coalition of six of the seven known alien cultures : the Terrans , the Artemia , the Mikotaj , the Achean Gatherings , the Braccatia and the Rigellians . The Federation was inaugurated in 2439 following a coup deposing the last Terran Emperor Dramon Salaria in 2437 and was established to encourage commercial competition rather than full @-@ scale wars between its constituent parties . The authority of the Federation is constantly challenged ? in part by those who helped to create it , and the further away from the Federal center a person is , the less the Federation can influence their day @-@ to @-@ day lives . The seventh alien culture ? the Mauna are not members of the Federation and it is revealed in the game that they are an untrustworthy and cruel species . It is not known if the Mauna were consulted with prior to the creation of the Federation , and trading with the Mauna is frowned upon by the Federation .

Numerous megacorporations exist within the Federation and TetraCorp is one of the largest and oldest . Their sister company is Sci @-@ Tek , which manufactures and supplies most of the technology that the player has access to . Sci @-@ Tek also has blueprints for advanced technologies that the player can purchase . The opening cinematic plays like a corporate recruitment video and at one point is jammed by a Terran male who tells the viewer that TetraCorp has a history of exploiting workers of all races and cultures with low pay and wretched working conditions . The movie is jammed a second time by an Artemian who tells the player that Terran progression was responsible for 68 % of all alien mortalities during the past three centuries and that the reason for this high percentage is due to megacorporations such as TetraCorp .

= = Development = =

Fragile Allegiance is essentially a remake of Gremlin Interactive 's 1994 Amiga game K240 , with the graphics and user interface revamped for the improved PC hardware available at the time . The core gameplay elements of K240 are retained ; the game is set in an asteroid belt , the Sci @-@ Tek blueprint system replaces research and the player is tasked with building up a successful mining operation . Many of the buildings , ships and missiles have the same names and functions as those in K240 and in both games there are six alien races competing against the player . The soundtrack for the game was composed by Patrick Phelan who also composed the soundtrack for K240 . The game was released in 1996 and competed against other empire building titles such as Ascendancy and Master of Orion 2 .

Fragile Allegiance was marketed as an intense deep space real @-@ time strategy game complete with complex face @-@ to @-@ face diplomacy . It was the first game to use Gremlin Interactive 's facial motion capture technology which allowed for highly detailed and realistic looking alien ambassadors , giving depth and adding atmosphere to the games diplomacy . Two versions of the game were released ? a European version and a North American version , with each region having different box art . There were two different demo versions , one with audio and one without audio . A

cheat code is available for the game and is entered slightly differently between the two versions . For the European version the code is " FRAGILE / cKim.Jon.fmsti " , while " FRAGILE / c.Osiris.fmsti " must be entered for the North American version . These codes reward the player with decreased construction time , extra money , the ability to see all asteroids in play , the ability to change the game speed in @-@ game and gives the player access to all of the information in the game .

Historically , people repored that Fragile Allegiance did not work properly on Windows XP and later Windows platforms , as the game was designed for MS @-@ DOS and ported to Windows 95 . The most common issues being reported are no audio , the game failing to start , and the game crashing when trying to rename anything , including saved games . As no patch was ever released for the game , people have had to use emulators such as VDMSound or DOSBox in order to get the game to function properly but it may still crash when trying to rename a saved game . The game is now however available for purchase from Steam and is packaged with a Dosbox build , making it compatible wih Windows 7 and later versions of Windows .

= = Reception = =

Fragile Allegiance was generally well received , achieving average to good scores from reviewers . It was praised for its graphics and icon driven interface which was considered slick and well integrated but a little confusing at first . Reviewers noted that after figuring out what all the icons did the game was immensely engrossing , with the player always having something to do . The game was criticised for its difficulty , its simplistic combat model , the time spent transporting ore between asteroids , and the large amount of micromanagement involved when the player 's empire got large ? although reviewers noted that the latter two could be countered by the " Ore Teleporter blueprint " and Colony Supervisors respectively . There were mixed feelings regarding the replacing of research with the Sci @-@ Tek blueprint system , which meant that any blueprint could be bought in any order provided the player had the money to do so .

The game was also criticised for only having one playable race (TetraCorp) . Despite these criticisms PC Gamer UK gave it the Game of Distinction award for Christmas of 1996 stating , " Takes ages to work out what 's going on , and immense concentration . But this is completely engrossing . " and awarded it a score of 91 % . Users of internet gaming site GameSpot rated Fragile Allegiance significantly higher than the site reviewer , rating it 8 @.@ 6 / 10 . Gamezilla 's review rated it at 75 % while GameRankings gave the game a score of 65 % .