

= Tranz Am =

Tranz Am is an action video game developed and published by Ultimate Play The Game that was released for the ZX Spectrum in July 1983 . The game is set in a post @-@ apocalyptic version of the United States and centres around a racing car driver on his quest to obtain the Eight Great Cups of Ultimate , which are scattered throughout the country .

The game was written by Chris Stamper and graphics were designed by Tim Stamper . Tranz Am was one of the very few Spectrum games also available in ROM format for use with the Interface 2 , allowing " instantaneous " loading of the game (the normal method of cassette loading could take several minutes) . The game received mostly positive reviews upon release : praise was given to the game 's graphics and simple controls , while criticism was directed at its confusing interface .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is set in a post @-@ apocalyptic version of the United States in the year 3472 . Eight Great Cups of Ultimate are dispersed around America , and the player 's mission is to obtain all of them . Petrol is in short supply and the only way to re @-@ fuel vehicles is to find petrol pumps , scattered across the country .

The game is presented in a top @-@ down perspective and involves driving around America to collect the eight trophies whilst avoiding natural hazards and kamikaze cars , which attempt to crash into the player . The player has a limited supply of petrol and must collect fuel at regular intervals by driving over petrol pumps . Obstacles include trees , boulders and destroyed buildings . The overworld has an invisible border which causes the player 's car to reverse automatically to ensure that they do not cross the game 's boundaries .

The interface displays a list of comprehensive data : a map showing a list of key cities in the contiguous United States , petrol gauge , speedometer , remaining lives and engine temperature . Every key city in the game contains at least one petrol station . If the player drives too fast for too long , their car will overheat and eventually break down , thus losing a life . To save an overheating car , the player must slow down or stop entirely .

= = Background = =

Ashby Computers and Graphics was founded by brothers Tim and Chris Stamper , along with Tim 's wife , Carol , from their headquarters in Ashby @-@ de @-@ la @-@ Zouch in 1982 . Under the trading name of Ultimate Play The Game , they began producing video games for the ZX Spectrum throughout the early 1980s . Prior to founding Ultimate , the Stamper brothers had backgrounds in designing arcade machines , but no marketing experience in the video game sector . The company were known for their reluctance to reveal details about their operations and upcoming projects . Little was known about their development process except that they used to work in " separate teams " : one team would work on development whilst the other would concentrate on other aspects such as sound or graphics .

Tranz Am was one of the few Spectrum games also available in ROM format for use with the Interface 2 , allowing " instantaneous " loading of the game when the normal method of cassette loading could take several minutes . The game used the common technique of placing planar sprites with image sprites atop another , which often created graphical errors and overlapped colours on the console . The game was also able to run on the 16K version of the Spectrum .

= = Reception = =

The game received a mostly positive reception upon release . Computer and Video Games praised the game 's controls and accessibility , stating that they were " easy to get into " upon the first try . A reviewer writing for Home Computing Weekly found the game to be " compulsive " overall , but noted that the game did not live up to the promises made by the description on the packaging .

Simon Lane of Popular Computing Weekly praised the game 's graphics , sound and presentation , stating that they were of " a very high quality " and that Tranz Am was an " original game " in comparison with the other games released by Ultimate . Lane criticised the game 's interface , however , stating that he found it difficult to " concentrate on everything all at once " . Lane also added that the game did not reward the player enough for collecting all of the cups , displaying just a short congratulation message before inviting him or her to begin again . A reviewer writing for Your Computer magazine heralded the game as a program of " outstanding achievement " , considering that the game 's playing area was calculated at " 600 times more than the actual screen area " .