

## = Labyrinth : The Computer Game =

Labyrinth : The Computer Game is a 1986 graphic adventure game developed by Lucasfilm Games and published by Activision . Based on the fantasy film Labyrinth , it tasks the player with navigating a maze while solving puzzles and evading dangers . The player 's goal is to find and defeat the main antagonist , Jareth , within 13 real @-@ time hours . Unlike other adventure games of the period , Labyrinth does not feature a command @-@ line interface . Instead , the player uses two scrolling " word wheel " menus on the screen to construct basic sentences .

Labyrinth was the first adventure game created by Lucasfilm . The project was led by designer David Fox , who invented its word wheels to avoid the text parsers and syntax guessing typical of text @-@ based adventure games . Early in development , the team collaborated with author Douglas Adams in a week @-@ long series of brainstorming sessions , which inspired much of the final product . Labyrinth received positive reviews and , in the United States , was a bigger commercial success than the film upon which it was based . Its design influenced Lucasfilm 's subsequent adventure title , the critically acclaimed Maniac Mansion .

## = = Overview = =

Labyrinth : The Computer Game is a graphic adventure game in which the player maneuvers a character through a maze while solving puzzles and evading dangers . It is an adaptation of the 1986 film Labyrinth , many of whose events and characters are reproduced in the game . However , it does not follow the plot of the film . At the beginning , the player enters their name , sex and favorite color : the last two fields determine the appearance of the player character . Afterward , a short text @-@ based adventure sequence unfolds , wherein the player enters a movie theater to watch the film Labyrinth . The game then changes to a graphic adventure format . Jareth , the main antagonist , appears on the projection screen and transports the protagonist to a labyrinthine prison .

The player 's goal is to locate and destroy Jareth within 13 real @-@ time hours ; otherwise , the protagonist will be trapped in the maze forever . While traveling the maze , the player passes through a series of scrolling hallways that contain doors , enemies and other things . A " radar " bar on the screen allows the player to see each hallway in miniature form : the locations of all doorways , items and characters in a given hallway are displayed . Unlike other adventure games of the period , Labyrinth does not feature a command @-@ line interface . Instead of typing commands , the player selects them from two scrolling " word wheels " , one for verbs and one for nouns . For example , the verb " congratulate " may be selected in one wheel , and the noun " Jareth " in the other : this inputs the command " congratulate Jareth " . Based on the player 's items and location , the available verbs and nouns change context @-@ sensitively .

## = = Development = =

Lucasfilm Games began to design Labyrinth : The Computer Game in 1985 . Company head George Lucas had requested a tie @-@ in video game for the movie of the same name , which was under production at Lucasfilm . As was common with Lucasfilm Games projects , Lucas himself provided very little direction to the team . Labyrinth was the first licensed game developed by the company : earlier products , such as Rescue on Fractalus ! and The Eidolon , had been original intellectual properties . According to project leader David Fox , working with a license " frees you up in some ways and restricts you , too " . With their adaptation , the team was not pressured to reuse events and characters from the Labyrinth film ; but they " felt obligated " to follow the source material . Because they saw the film as an adventure story , they chose to set their adaptation in the adventure game genre . However , Fox disliked the genre 's then @-@ reliance on text parsers and syntax guessing , and so he created the word wheel menus as a replacement . They were meant to supply " a limited set of words that still let you do a lot of things " , in order to streamline the game without hampering the player 's freedom . The game 's visual design was shared by Lucasfilm 's

Habitat , a massively multiplayer online game under production at the time .

Early in development , the game 's team was screened a rough cut of the film . Afterward , they were sent to London by Lucasfilm management for a one @-@ week brainstorming session with Douglas Adams , author of The Hitchhiker 's Guide to the Galaxy . Adams had worked previously with Infocom , during the development of his book 's 1984 video game adaptation . Also present at the meetings were writer Christopher Cerf ( a friend of the film 's director , Jim Henson ) and Brenda Laurel of Activision , the game 's publisher . The team worked extensively with Adams during this period . Laurel later wrote , " Every day a fresh blast of his wild and intelligent humor stoked up the creativity of the team . " In her view , the pinnacle of the meetings was Adams ' idea for the opening sequence . He suggested a reference to The Wizard of Oz 's famous transition from black @-@ and @-@ white to color : a transition from a text @-@ based format to a graphical one .

Fox was given the job of taking notes during the trip . Although he had hoped for a complete design to emerge from the meetings , he returned from London with only " sheets and sheets of ideas " , through which he sifted to find usable concepts . However , all of the material influenced the game , and many of Adams ' suggestions were used . Retrospectively , Fox felt that the opening sequence was a mistake : he called it " tedious " and believed that it alienated potential fans . Labyrinth was released in 1986 for the Commodore 64 , Apple II and MSX .

= = Reception = =

In the United States , Labyrinth was more commercially successful than the film upon which it was based . Commodore Magazine 's Mark Cotone lauded the game 's puzzle design , detailed graphics and newcomer @-@ friendly interface . He believed that experienced players would enjoy its depth and challenging puzzles . Keith Campbell of Commodore User praised its animation and dubbed it " a superb game " ? which he found unusual , given its status as a tie @-@ in product . However , Campbell hesitated to call it an adventure game , and he wrote that the word wheels were " rather tedious " for genre veterans . Roy Wagner of Computer Gaming World summarized Labyrinth as a " very well done [ game ] with an excellent user interface " .

Writing for Computer & Video Games , Matthew Woodley praised the game 's variety and interface . While he disliked its long loading times , he believed that they were " a small price to pay for such a brilliant game " . However , Labyrinth was criticized by the three reviewers of Zzap ! 64 . Although he praised its visuals , co @-@ reviewer Paul Sumner called the game too slow @-@ paced for an action title and too simplistic for an adventure . Co @-@ reviewer Julian Rignall considered it to be boring and " a real disappointment " , given Lucasfilm 's strong track record .

= = = Legacy = = =

Labyrinth was the first adventure game produced by Lucasfilm , which became a critically acclaimed and commercially successful developer in the genre . The game 's technology and mechanics influenced the company 's subsequent title Maniac Mansion , whose " SCUMM " engine was reused in many Lucasfilm adventure games . The word wheels were a predecessor to that game 's point @-@ and @-@ click interface . Gary Winnick , an artist for Labyrinth , went on to lead the production of Maniac Mansion with Ron Gilbert . Fox contributed to Maniac Mansion as well , and he later directed Lucasfilm 's Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders . Retrospectively , writers for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation regarded Labyrinth as a solid first attempt , but as inferior to " the real classics " made afterward by Lucasfilm .