

DARK STAR

© DESIGN DESIGN

THE GAME

The object of Dark Star is to liberate your galaxy from domination by the Evil Lord's tyrannical Empire. To achieve your aim you must wipe out all the enemy's military centres on the planets within your galaxy (these are shown in green on the Tactical Sector Map). The game difficulty setting will determine the degree to which the Empire has extended its sphere of influence throughout the galaxy.

LOADING

AMSTRAD 464 OWNERS

1. Place the reound cassette into the cassette unit and press PLAY.
2. Hold down CTRL and press the SMALL ENTER key.

AMSTRAD 664, 6128 and 464+DISK OWNERS.

1. Hold down SHIFT and press the @ key. Type TAPE and press RETURN.
2. Connect a suitable cassette player to your computer, according to the User Manual, and insert the reound cassette.
3. Hold down CONTROL and press the ENTER key.
4. Press PLAY on the cassette player.

NOTE: Full loading instructions can be found in your Amstrad Manual.

PLAYING THE GAME

The Dark Star galaxy is divided into a 16 x 16 grid of sectors in the galactic plain. The LIAR's battle computer generates a real time display on your screen which shows all activity in your immediate vicinity. As well as showing enemy ships and their missiles, this display will also show energy concentrations and Warp Gates to hyperspace. Energy concentrations are shown as pulsating blue squares; flying through these will enable LIAR to increase its supply of shield energy. Energy used to operate the ship's navigation and weaponry systems is generated by an internal energy source. The deflector screens will draw a large amount of energy if hit by an enemy missile.

LIAR's weaponry is of the fixed mount type, aimed by manoeuvring the ship. The point towards which LIAR is flying is marked on the display by the cursor. This is moved by using the up, down, left and right keys, while LIAR's velocity is altered using accelerate and decelerate. Pressing a fire key will release a burst of plasma bolts in the direction LIAR is flying, destroying any enemy ship or missile on that line.

Enemy ships will fire on the LIAR by prediction, so it is essential not to fly on the same course or speed for any length of time. The best way to avoid missiles being to rapidly change your velocity.

Moving from one sector to another requires you to make a transition to hyperspace. This is done by first finding a set of Warp Gates, which your battle computer sees and displays as four yellow squares changing shape as the Gates open and close, and then flying LIAR into one of these whilst it is open. The four gates are arranged in a North, South, East, West fashion such that you can select the direction you wish to move within the grid, by flying through the appropriate gate. If the LIAR is in a sector at the edge of the grid one of the gates will be missing, or two if LIAR is in a corner sector.

The route through hyperspace is mapped out as a rectangular tunnel, down which you must guide the LIAR. Travelling outside of this tunnel puts a heavy load on your screens and uses much energy, so accurate flying is essential. The Dark Star galaxy has planets in it. These can be investigated further by flying down on to their surfaces. This is achieved by flying directly up to a planet, as if on a collision course.

Your computer will then carry out a re-entry manoeuvre during which your screen will blank for an instant, as your sensors are blinded by the LIAR using its momentum to smash through the planetary shielding.

The surface of a planet occupied by enemy forces will be defended by anti-aircraft weaponry, raised above the surface on towers. These can be disabled by firing at the towers, which will collapse when hit. Certain areas of the planet are defended by force fields which will damage the LIAR if flown through.

There are, however, holes in these fields which your computer will detect and display as rectangles. If you fly through these no energy will be lost. The enemy bases on the planets are hidden in the centre of a ring of defences, and are themselves protected by three towers. These bases generate the planetary defence shields, which must be rendered inoperative, by destroying all the bases on a planet, before the LIAR can return to space.

Without the velocity attainable in space, the LIAR can never build up the momentum required to pass through these shields, so if you elect to go down on to a planet you cannot escape again until all the bases on it are destroyed. This feature can, however, be disabled from within the game option menus.

Pressing '1' whilst on the surface of a planet will cause your computer to display a tactical map of the surface, showing defences, bases and fuel dumps. The LIAR's position and direction are denoted on the map by a white arrow. There is also an arrow displayed on the main screen to show LIAR's direction in respect to the map. Bases are shown as concentric rectangles, defences as shaded areas (density shows difficulty), fuel dumps as blue dots and spaceports as magenta rectangles.

You may leave a planet's surface and return to space by flying with maximum speed and maximum climb at the same time, though only after all the enemy bases have been destroyed.

Fuel dumps on the surface will consist of a number of energy concentrations. These are held in force fields generated by the surrounding towers. To gain extra energy guide your ship through these as you would in space, but beware of the towers; they are armed and will fire on you.

Enemy spaceports are defended by both towers and enemy ships. They are fairly difficult targets, but it is not necessary to destroy these before leaving a planet.

CONTROLS

Dark Star has a fully user definable game control system, which is explained by the incorporated screen instructions. Please note that the programme will select keyboard control or joystick control automatically, depending on which menu was last used. Under joystick control, the accelerate and decelerate controls will remain on the keyboard as defined by the user. We do not recommend use of joysticks in playing Dark Star.

All aspects of the game are open to user control, including the display format, and can be altered by use of the highly flexible, menu driven front end.

The keys '1' to '0' cannot be defined by the user. Those that are used in the game are as follows:-

1 Causes the display to switch between visual and tactical displays. On the surface of a planet, this will show the arrangement of defences as detailed above. Whilst the LIAR is in space the tactical display will show a map of all the 256 sectors within the galaxy, though your battle computer will only mark those sectors containing enemy planets. The type of defence employed on a given planet is also marked according to the displayed key. The LIAR's position within the galaxy is shown by a flashing square surrounding the sector it is located in.

3 & 4 When pressed together will cause the LIAR to self-destruct, aborting the game and returning to the main menu of high score table on the next key press.

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* Correct at time of printing