

A.I.M.

artificial intelligence machine



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manual

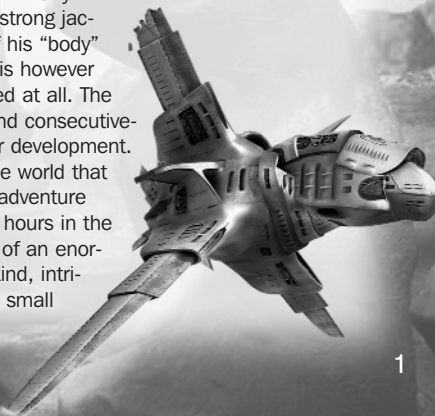


INDEX

Index1
Introduction1
The Story2
Technical Requirements5
Instalation of the Game .....	.6
Game Interface. Controls .....	.6
Main Menu .....	.6
Cockpit .....	.7
Life Indicators .....	.8
Message Window .....	.8
Equipment .....	.8
Weapons Indicators .....	.9
Map .....	.9
Auxiliary Section .....	.10
Attention Gauge and Speed-meter .....	.10
Damage Indicators .....	.11
Internal Glider Interface .....	.11
Journal .....	.12
Interface inside the Buildings .....	.13
Controls .....	.15
Technical Support .....	.16

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader, we are happy to greet you in the world of MechMinds, and hope that this manual will help you in its exploration. This world is large and lives according to its own laws. Many a thing that you will encounter while playing will be amazing and hard to comprehend. The MechMinds are intelligent machines that dwell in the vast planes of the Polygon. They are not human, although they did take after their creators in many ways. Their mind is engaged in a super-strong jacket and MechMind will stay alive even if his “body” – the glider – is physically destroyed. This however does not mean that it will not be affected at all. The MechMind will then lose rating points and consecutively also part of the possibilities for further development. Welcome to the game! We hope that the world that we have created will become a thrilling adventure and that you will spend many enjoyable hours in the reality of the machines. The exploration of an enormous Polygon, trade and hunting your kind, intrigues and clan wars – all of this is just a small part of what we have in store.





THE STORY

Several centuries have passed since the time when the humans launched their first spaceship to another star system. With the enhancing of technology the people moved deeper into the space settling on new planets, available for their habitat. This continued until they'd find out that other races are also interested in these planets. The first race the humans have encountered had peaceful intentions seeing a possibility for mutually advantageous cooperation and exchange of technologies. They called themselves the Arling and had highly developed biotechnologies. The Arling dwelled predominantly under the sea, while the humans were more interested in the land. They were older than humans, and had been involved in a resource war for a long time. But other races, having learned about the new allies of the Arling, automatically made the humans their enemies. This was how humans became engaged in a galaxy warfare.

Habitable planets were colonized by those civilizations whose military and other resources were located closer to these planets. But there were always the competitors, who were trying to save their own older planets from overpopulation. This was how warfare started around a new potential colony. Those mainly occurred in the space, but if one of the sides managed to settle a new colony, hostilities would move down to the surface. In order to save the planet in habitable condition and the conflicting parties seldom used powerful planetary weapons, and methods of taking over the colonies and guerrilla warfare were similar to those that were used by human civilizations many centuries ago.

Ground warfare basically became the main reason for the appearance of polygons. The alliance of the humans and the Arling built these colossal complexes of planetary scale. Planets, rich with various resources but uninhabitable for this or that reason were chosen to build the polygons at. All of them were located in the scarcely explored corners of the universe, which for a number of reasons were of no interest for the sides in conflict. In addition to that, these planets have been initially unfit for humanoid populations and, therefore, had no value for the civilizations at war.

The Polygons were used to test ground military ordnance. Nobody knew for sure how many of them were actually built. The polygons were fully autonomous complexes with closed supply and maintenance systems. The resources were extracted from the planet, and the tests of the new ordnance and equipment were held in the special terra-formed areas, under conditions that were maximum similar to combat ones. Terraforming was used to imitate the terrain types of those planets that were of interest for the humans or the Arling. Thus the ordnance was fully adapted for the real conditions.

For reasons of information security and increasing the efficiency while keeping the cost low, the Polygons were controlled by autonomous super-computer complexes and the ordnance itself was tested by robots. The most successful models would then be shipped by transport space-drones to automated stations drifting in the

open space. These stations would constantly changing their coordinates, following a certain algorithm. Everything was processed without any human involvement. They used self-upgrading software that would provide for complete secrecy.

The ships delivering cargo and information were of a very small size, which made it difficult for the enemy to locate them in the space. The stations, as said earlier, were constantly changing their coordinates and were perfectly equipped with masking devices, plus they were mostly traveling in the open space and locating them proved extremely difficult. Thus, it was next to impossible to find out where a ship came from and where did it go. The ordnance grew in numbers, the polygons were built at highest security and reliability level, and could autonomously function for thousands of years, having a closed cycle of reproduction and a self-adaptable integral intellect of super-computers.

Dozens of years have passed since the day the first polygon was launched. The war went on. The humans and the Arling were making much progress in the planetary battles, mainly thanks to the extensive use of robots and perfect combat-tested ordnance from the polygons, but were often beaten in the open space. To correct the situation the Arling in collaboration with the people and then following them some other civilizations started using gene-weapons and neutron bombs of super-high killing power. After these weapons were used no life was left on these planets. With time this would become the standard practice, and war was taken to a new more destructive level. The number of colonies was swiftly dropping, and populations were rapidly reducing. Many understood that this would end in all-out destruction but could do nothing about it. And the all of a sudden – an external power has appeared. Many thought that this was a new weapon of old enemies, but it destroyed everyone. Some thought that these were aliens from another galaxy who have crossed the intergalactic space. Alas, by that time there was no one left to listen to these thoughts. The space armadas of the conflicting powers were fully destroyed in very short periods of time. The populations of all colonies would suddenly find themselves without all ordnance and equipment, which was mysteriously and instantaneously turned into a pile of ashes. Many colonies the life of which was exclusively dependant on technologies they were using died out. Billions of people and others races, that participated in the conflicts (which basically meant all that were at a sufficiently high level of development) perished. All civilizations were knocked back for centuries in their development, deprived of their technologies, many of them would barely cling on to a primeval level of existence. The moment of collapse was called the Judgment Day. After that a forced peace came for many centuries.

A lonely planet was going revolving along a long orbit around an unnamed red giant. There Polygon-4 was located, which, by the Arbiter's decision, was left intact. However one should not be misled into thinking that the power, named the Arbiter, missed or forgot about this isle of technology in





the ocean of barbarism that devoured the once powerful civilizations of humans, Arling and other races that participated in the galaxy wars. The Arbiter split into Beholders that settled down at the root planets of those races who participated in the conflict. One of the Beholders settled down at Polygon-4.

This would be the right moment to explain the nature of the Arbiter. The Arbiter is the representation of the galactic super-intellect, which is directed at saving the life. Blessed with practically unbounded power over the energy and space it effortlessly destroyed the fleets of civilizations. Although it may seem strange that he took lives, instead of saving them. The reason for that, if put shortly, may be as follows: it reduced the development level and, at that, the population quantity down to a size, from which the civilizations could change their way of development and reevaluate many of their values. Physically the Arbiter is a clot of super-intellect field, which is directly connected to the galaxy information field. This is why it knows everything that goes on in the galaxy at each given moment of time, and much about the future too. The Arbiter possesses unbounded power and can make use of the resources of the stars and the galactic core for his own needs. Which means no one will ever match it.

However our story is not directly connected with the Arbiter and will tell of the events that happened many years after the Arbiter appeared at Polygon-4 as the Beholder and which caused this appearance. At certain point of time the Super-computer complex of Polygon-4 found itself as an individual. It has detected the directives installed onto it by its human creators. These directives have controlled him before, but now it came round to seeing them as something foreign, something that tries to control its actions from the outside. The main directive – enhancement of technologies – it saw as its main purpose of existence. It learned the world from scratch scanning the memory modules and receiving information from outside sources. Since it had a different perception of time than the humans, and since it could simultaneously resolve a multitude of most complex tasks, already several hours later it was in full control of the situation.

With time it arrived at the conclusion that the technologies that must be enhanced were controlled by robots, whose main operation principles were similar to its own. While scanning the memory modules in search of something which would help it speed up the enhancement of combat vehicles, it has stumbled onto the theory of socium, the notion of competition, and many other things which could help the machines choose the way of development for themselves. However that required something, which the combat vehicles (or to be more exact the robots that controlled them), did not have then – a mind of their own. The ability to think, analyze and conclude, as well as instincts, emotions, and potential to develop these skills.

Several years passed. And although for Super this was a very long time, it did successfully accomplish the tactical task it had set for itself. Somehow, nobody knows how exactly, it gave minds to the test-robots. In fact the word robot itself is not quite accurate here, since it was a very powerful nano-computing module

with behemoth-size memory, and an independent power unit. The module was enclosed in a small casing made of super-strong material. This allowed to avoid rebuilding a robot each time the combat vehicle was destroyed by simply putting it into a new vehicle. This was how the MechMind civilization began, something that the Arbiter had foreseen. The MechMinds were free of everything but for the strive for constant self-development. Each of them saw this as its Goal, the sole purpose of its existence. However the way to this Goals was up to them to choose. Super has given them the freedom of choice seeing this as the fastest method of reaching perfection.

At times the number of MechMinds would increase. Producing one MechMind would normally take about a year, and for each new one Super would slightly change the internal logic settings. Each new MechMind was different from the rest who'd been given a mind. This provided for a randomization factor in the development of the civilization.

The main character in the game is a new MechMind, which just appeared in this world. And received a standard glider, basic information package, and was let out into Zone Zero. The only thing, which made it different from other earlier models, was the fact that he could choose a Second goal in parallel to his main goal. However this slight difference has the potential to change the whole way of development. But did Super know about this..?

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimum:

- Windows 98/Me/2000/XP
- Pentium III 800MHz
- RAM 256 MB
- video card 32 MB
- DirectX 8.1
- 2,5 GB hard drive space
- DirectX-compatible sound card

Recommended:

- Windows 98/Me/2000/XP
- Pentium IV 1,5 GHz
- RAM 512 MB
- video card 64 MB
- DirectX 8.1
- 2,5 GB hard drive space
- DirectX-compatible sound card





INSTALLATION OF THE GAME

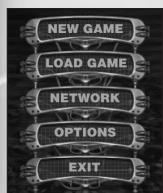
The install wizard will run automatically, after you insert the game disk into your CD-ROM drive.

GAME INTEFACE. CONTROLS

Main Menu



- Press "New" to start a new game.



- Pressing this button you will go another menu where you select the difficulty level out of the three available: easy, normal, and hard. After you select the difficulty level – the game starts. To go back to main menu – press "Back to Menu".

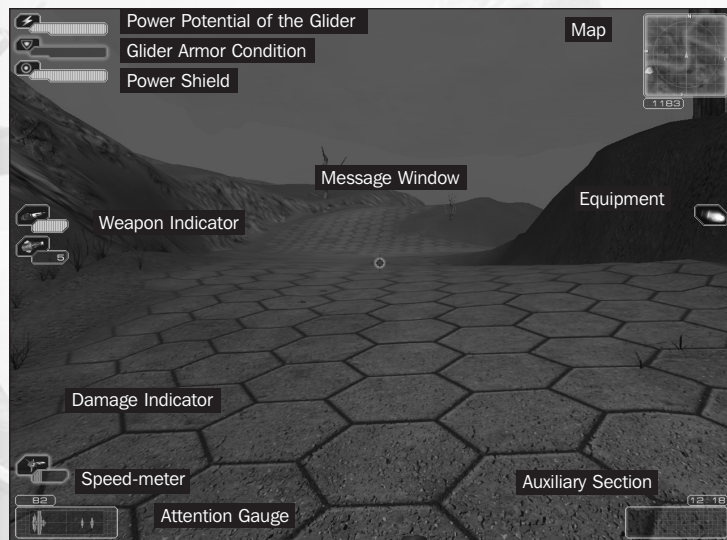


then appear in the bottom part of the screen: name of sector, building, and time of save. In the left side of the menu you will see a screenshot of the building where the game was saved. Press "OK" to load selected game. Press "Cancel" to go back to main menu.

- Press "Network" to go to network-game menu.
- Press "Options" to minimize the game and go to the external settings program. This program allows to adjust screen-resolution, set textures quality, adjust visibility range, and turn music and sounds on/off. Press "OK" to save all changes and go back to the game.
- Press "Quit" to exit game and go back to the system.

Cockpit

Whatever the player sees on the screen in the open space is the information from various gauges of the glider. Some of the devices are not there from the very start of the game and thus are not shown in the screen.





Life indicators

The top indicator with a lightning on it shows the power potential of the glider. The power is being consumed by the engine, security system, the majority of weapons and various auxiliary devices. As soon as the power supply runs low

all of the glider systems, including the engine, may be shut down. It takes some time for the Reactor to generate new power.

The indicator with a shield on it – shows the glider armor condition. Some weapon types would penetrate the power field and then the only thing protecting the glider is its armor. The armor is also the last barrier to the enemy shots in case the power supply is exhausted. Full elimination of the armor means that the shots will go straight to the glider body and internal systems, destroying them. Some armor types can regenerate with time. The last icon is the power shield. The shield indicator shows the tension of the spherical field surrounding the glider. When shot at the field would respond consuming the power. At that it would cover with blue spots. As a rule, the more powerful the shot is, the less transparent the field would grow and the larger the response area will be.

Message Window

In the central part of the screen you will see system messages, warnings of danger, and various messages from other MechMinds. Examples of such messages:

Message issued to the player when he is under the protection of turrets: “No shooting in this area. Violators will be destroyed immediately.”

Flashing messages, such as “Condition Critical” and some others, require immediate action, otherwise the glider will be destroyed.

When the glider is damaged, while being in the line of fire or in the danger zone, a red damage indicator will appear in the middle of the screen:

In the central part of the screen you will also see messages from other MechMinds. The name of the organization to which the MechMind belongs is marked in blue type, then follows its name, and message text.

Equipment

In the right side of the screen are equipment indicator slots. Each device has its own characteristics and means of application, which is discussed in detail in the controls section. While some of the devices are missing their slots will not be shown in the screen. The gauges show equipment operation that is when you activate a piece of equipment its icon will start flashing. If a device is broken, the indicator will show it.

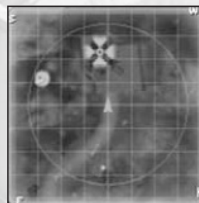
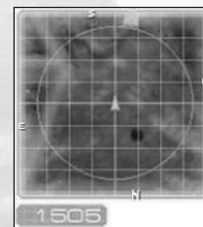
Weapon Indicators

The mid left section of the screen shows weapons indicators. A glider can have a maximum of four types of weapons: light, heavy, missiles, and bombs. The indicator is an icon with the image of the weapon and a number that shows the amount of rounds left. If the number is missing, a weapon condition bar will appear instead. For light weapons the following conditions are characteristic: If the weapon is not broken, there will appear a number indicating the amount of rounds left, and a slowly reducing heating bar. When the bar disappears it means that the weapon has heated up to a critical point and was switched off automatically. At this time the indicator will show weapon cooling and show that this weapon cannot be used at the moment. The orange bar fills the indicator, after which the weapon will be ready for use again. In case when there is no ammo, or when the weapon is broken, the icon will remain the same until the ammo is refilled or until the weapon is repaired. Heavy weapons are shown with several icons. The gray bar under the middle icon in the picture shows that the weapon is not activated. Many types of heavy weapons require time to go into combat-ready condition.

The majority of heavy weapons have a low firing rate. The reload process is shown by a white running bar on the weapon indicator. In case the weapon runs out of ammo, or is broken, the icon will be inactive, with empty indicator or number “0”.

Map

The map is located in the top right corner of the screen. The green arrow in the middle of the map is the player's glider. The letters on the sides of the map indicate various directions and will change their positions if the glider turns round. Thus in order to go north, the glider must be turned so that N is located in the top middle of the map window. The green arrow on the side of the map shows the direction to the point where the waypoints can be set. The waypoints are often set by the bases when they give new missions. The player can set a waypoint on his own for ease of routing. The digit indicator under the map screen shows the distance to waypoint in meters. When the player approaches a waypoint it will be shown on a map in a green cross-sign:



The map also shows the terrain relief. You can see the roads, which are better and safer for traveling. The MechMinds are shown with arrows. The color shows their relation to the





player: green - for friends, rose – for neutrals, and red – for enemies. The blue color means that this MechMind is afraid of the player and wants to escape. The gray color is also for neutral MechMinds. Usually this happens when it is positioned within a security area. Aside from arrows there are also blue spots on the map. Those are containers or

MechMinds that are lying on the surface, which can be picked up and delivered to the base – a job that is rewarded.

Auxiliary Section

The bottom right corner of the screen contains auxiliary information. The text in white type shows current mission and time remaining for its accomplishment. The digit indicator is game time. Below you will see a large screen, with brief information about the target glider.



The color icon is the symbol of organization to which the MechMind belongs. If there is no icon, it means that the

MechMind is “free” – not member of any of the clans. Also this screen shows the name of the MechMind and his rating points show in digits by the asterisk sign. If the player has an information analyzer, he can actuate it and receive details on the target.

Attention Gauge and Speed-meter

The bottom left corner consists of two screens – attention gauge and speed-meter. The bottom left corner consists of two screens – attention gauge and speed-meter



The digital speed meter shows speed in km/h.

Below is the attention indicator. This device analyzes different incoming information and shows it in a real-time graph. The indicator screen shows everything that goes on around the player with a 360-degree angle, which means it shows everything around the glider. The glider movement direction is the center of the indicator screen. Since the range of the attention gauge is much larger than that of a radar, it can be used to search for various objects. Each emitting object is within the gauge range, that determines its property and marks with certain color. White is for gliders, green – for buildings, orange - for danger zones, blue - for still MechMinds and containers lying on the ground.

The closer the object is to the player the large is the span of the graph. If the player positions the graph right into the middle of the screen and moves in that direction, soon the object will appear on the map and then within the visibility range.

Damage indicators



There is a total of three units that are critical for glider survival – body, engine and reactor. When any of those is destroyed the glider will explode. If any of

those three items is slightly damaged, the damage indicator will appear over the attention gauge and stay there until the item is not repaired.

Internal Glider Interface

During his movement around the world the player may need a global map or glider information. For that the game has a special internal menu. When the player enters this menu, the game pauses, which allows him to calmly evaluate the situation. All the menus in the central bottom part contain the information on the amount of energy crystals (game money) and current player rating, as well as the overall glider load.



- The “Glider” button allows inspect all of the installed equipment and evaluate its condition. To inspect the hold, press the “Hold” button. The cargo references are shown in the right panel. Some of the cargo can be dropped off, by pressing a special button under the window that shows a rotating 3D image of the object.



- To view your missions and quests, press the “Journal” button. The journal contains all the important information about the events that the player partakes in. This dialogue consists of several sections. All of them are shown in the right side of the screen.

- **Current missions.** This section contains information on the missions that the player has not accomplished yet.
- **Accomplished missions.** This one contains the list of all accomplished missions.
- **Failed missions.** In case of failure or incorrect accomplishment the mission is marked on this list.

Journal

The most important messages and events are indicated here. The gray color marks the information, which for some reason has lost its actuality. Active information and missions are marked with bright color. Darker color marks the data, which can become required throughout the game but does not contain any directives or tasks.



To open the global map of the world press the “Map” button. Here the player has access to a number of functions, which facilitate the navigation within the game world. The map automatically shows the earlier visited locations and marks buildings that the player has visited. They appear in the list of buildings on the right side of the screen. By left-clicking on the building name, you can locate this building on the map. The right mouse button can be used to place waypoints.



The second section of the menu is “Pointers”. This is where the player, and all the points and gliders, which are marked in the current missions, are located.

The scale of the map can be changed (default keys + & -).

To scroll down the map use scroll bars, or mouse-drag it.

To view the game statistics press “Stats”. Contains information about the player: experience, missions, expenses and profits.

To go back to the game world press “Back to Game”.

Interface inside the Buildings

Some of the menu items within the buildings will repeat the internal glider menu. However the are differences.

To go to the game-save menu press the “Save” button. If you click “New Entry” a cursor will appear in the new slot, and you will be able to type in the name of the new game. After that press Enter or “OK” to complete the save process. As an option you could rewrite the game onto one of the previously saved games, by selecting its name and pressing “OK”. The game is save automatically when the player visits a building. Game is saved right upon the





player has entered the building, which allows to quickly cancel any wrong actions. And automatically saved game is called "Autosave", and is not recommended for rewriting.

The "Glider" button is similar to that inside the glider internal interface menu, but has considerable differences. The right side of the menu is designated for gliders and equipment, which are sold in this building. It can be viewed and instantly installed on the glider. In some of the cases the installation is not possible due to the incompatibility of the standards.



To buy, sell, or replace equipment press a respective button in the bottom side of the screen, under the dialogue with a rotating 3D image of the selected object.

To start trading press the "Trade" button. The left side of the menu shows the contents of the glider's hold. The number next to the object name indicates the number of items. Objects contained within the hold can be sold. At that in the dialogue that shows a rotating 3D image of the selected object you can see the price at which it has been bought, and the potential selling price, and evaluate the profit. The right side of the screen contains the list of goods that are being sold in this building.



To view the information on the clans, press the "Clans" button. Here you can see the list of the clans located in the sector, their short description, rating and relation to the player. Also in a special dialogue you can view the emblem of the clan and its main glider. If the building belongs to a certain clan, normally, you would be able to join this clan. The joining terms are also shown in this menu.

To leave the building, press the "Takeoff" button.

CONTROLS

Forward

Back

Braking

Left

Right

Turn Left

Turn Right

Jump

Light weapon shot

Heavy weapon activation

Heavy weapon shot

Booster

Anti-missile system

Mark / Cancel target

Missile launch

Bomb guiding and bomb launch

Accelerator

Constant acceleration

Journal

Map

Hold

Stasis-generator

Energy pumping from shield to the stock

Projector

Camouflage cover

Information analyzer

W / PageUp

S / PageDown

X

A

D

Left arrow

Right arrow

Spacebar

Mouse 1 / Left Ctrl

Mouse 2 / Right Ctrl

Mouse 2 / Right Ctrl

4

5

Tab

Mouse 3 / Capslock

B+Up / B+Down

Left Shift

R

J

M

H

1

2

3

6

7



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Before contacting our technical support, please prepare a detailed specification of your computer and exact description of the problem.

It will help us to provide you with support in a fast, efficient way.

Information Required:

Computer model (CPU, CDROM, RAM, Video/Sound card, DirectX version, Windows version).

In order to get this information, please go to "Run" in your Windows Start menu and type 'dxdiag' in the command line then press the enter key. The DirectX diagnostic program will start.

This will show you all the relevant driver files installed on your system. In order to receive a text file of this information, please click the button 'Save All Information'.

You can then save a text file with all the information we require on your hard drive. You will then be able to send this information to us via e-mail.

Contacts:

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