

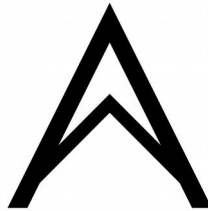
Flatspace III: A Friendly Field Guide

Flatspace III

A Friendly Field Guide

by

Hank 'Sky Metro' Hyena

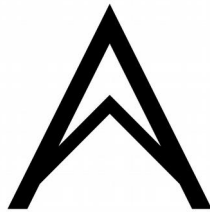


Flatspace III: A Friendly Field Guide

Flatspace Ilk: A Friendly Field Guide

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A Friendly Field Guide



Flatspace III: A Friendly Field Guide

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by Hank 'Sky Metro' Hyena

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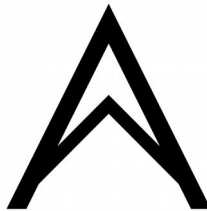
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of outer space.

Let us begin.



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Welcome, Starpilot

This guide is roughly split into three parts. The first part briefly explains some fundamentals about the game. The second part is a tour guide to the Flatspace IIk galaxy and contains lots of information for any budding space pilot. The appendix contains extra information including the production credits.

Flatspace IIk is a massive game. This guide does not try to explain every game option in depth but permits the player to explore and discover things for themselves. The tour guide contains many subtle hints at the less obvious aspects of the game.

AN INTRODUCTION TO FLATSPACE

Aims And Plot

Flatspace IIIk is set in the distant future. Space has expanded to such an extent that stars and planets can no longer hold form. Humanity still lives and works in space stations and ships, islands of light and technology in an otherwise cold and flat void.

Humans share the galaxy with an alien race called the Scarrid. A cold war exists between humanity and the Scarrid, and although both sides share the same technology the two races generally keep themselves to themselves.

Your ultimate goal is to destroy all of the Scarrid space stations (or destroy all of the human space stations if you choose to play as a Scarrid). Space stations are very well defended, so you will need to acquire money for more advanced equipment to achieve your task. Both sides are constantly fighting and it is up to you to destroy the enemy stations before they destroy yours.

In Flatspace IIIk, many actions affect your rating in one of several guilds. Certain special pieces of equipment or ships are only available to ranking members of certain guilds so improving your guild rating is another goal to aim for.

There are many ways to gain money and equipment in Flatspace IIIk and as a space captain you can choose how to do it. As a trader you can earn vast profits by buying and selling cargo from space station to station. As a bounty hunter or police officer you can get cash rewards for killing

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or capturing criminals. As a rock miner or scavenger you can scoop up rocks or cargo and sell them. As a courier you can get paid to deliver goods.

There is a lot of freedom for the player in Flatspace III. In a custom game you can turn off the Scarrid race and explore the universe, or play a game of cops and robbers in a galaxy containing just police and space pirates, or try some of the other scenarios available.

Quick Controls

The menu systems all use a similar control system. You can use the mouse and the left mouse button to select icons, or use the arrow keys. Return will select an icon and Esc will go back a page. Sometimes the left/right arrows can be used too.

In the game, the default controls use the mouse to steer and fly your ship. Press Esc to enter/exit your ship and use the menu system, and Space for the galactic map. While in space, press F1 to display a screen showing all of the game controls.

Players of the original Flatspace game will find that the default controls are the same in Flatspace III.

Player Professions

When you start a game, your first command decision is a choice of race and profession. The profession you choose determines the ship and equipment you will begin with. Note however that you, as captain, are free to play the game in any way you want to. You are not tied to any particular path or job and as you experience life in the Flatspace galaxy, you can upgrade your ship or equipment whenever you want to and can afford to do so.

There are two races in Flatspace IIIk and professions are mutually exclusive. Set your chosen race and profession on the Character Selection screen.

Below the profession, you can choose between Death Means Death or Undead. If you select Death Means Death, any save games for that character will be deleted when the game is over so the game is more difficult. If you choose Undead, you can reload old games even after your character has died. Note that you can only enter the graveyard, the hall of remembrance for fallen heroes, if Death Means Death. Every other aspect of the game is identical.

Finally on the Character Selection screen you can select the game difficulty. This is the amount of damage your craft can sustain relative to the other ships you will encounter. A brief guide to the professions now follows.

Human Professions

Trader

As a trader your primary task is to buy cargo from one space station and sell at another. A trading scanner is provided to every trader. Trading ships are generally large in capacity but weak in combat roles, however some initial stock and a reliable means of making a profit balances out any of the weaknesses.

Mercenary

A mercenary is ideally suited to missions or detective work. Mercenaries start with enough money to start customising their ship right away and a tracking scanner is provided to allow mission targets or wanted criminals to be tracked on the map. Mercenaries make excellent taxi or delivery drivers.

Bounty Hunter

The bounty hunter is a desirable but difficult profession. A bounty hunter can instantly make money by being able to scan and identify criminals, and then destroy them to claim any reward. Bounty hunters start with a ship large enough to trade with and agile enough for combat. No radar is provided however, making it difficult to locate other ships, and the process of seeking and attacking pirate ships is inherently dangerous.

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Assassin

Assassins start in a well armed agile attack craft with a simple tracking scanner. Perfect for simple assassination missions on offer on some space stations, assassins also make good couriers and delivery drivers due to the fast ship.

Police Officer

Like bounty hunters, the police start with a scanner capable of identifying criminals, but this time much more equipment is provided. Police equipment includes a radar, stun missiles and a passenger scoop, allowing live capture of the people inside the spinning yellow and black lifepods. The police can also request back up using the radio. In the game, buy a police vessel to join the force.

Scavenger

Scavengers start with a spacious ship and a cargo scoop, and they can make an instant profit by scooping small asteroids and selling the mineral cargo. Scavengers can also scoop cargo from the pods released by trading ships, and the start vessel is ideal for starting an alternative career in trading.

Scarrid Professions

Warrior

Warriors start with an agile attack ship with good weapons, a radar and a simple flare launcher. Their best hope for instant reward is to attack human ships, particularly taxi or transporter ships that often carry a large number of victims.

Abductor

Abductors start with an agile attack ship with good weapons, a scoop for capturing people and a flare launcher for self defence. Part way between a pirate and bounty hunter, abductors can capture criminals or act as slavemasters or rescue craft.

Predator

Predators are the closest thing the Scarrid race gets to police. Like the a human bounty hunter, a predator starts with a basic array of equipment including a scanner capable of identifying criminals.

Nomad

Nomads are peaceful wanderers, explorers of the galactic realm. They begin unarmed, but carry a cargo scoop to scavenge rocks and driftwood. The cartographer's league rewards unarmed vessels that discover space stations so nomads can instantly earn money in this way.

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A TOUR GUIDE TO FLATSPACE

by Queedius Cankwit
of the Rentex Hull & Astrogation Corporation

Congratulations!

Congratulations on the acquisition of your new space craft. This guide is compiled by the Rentex Hull & Astrogation Corporation, and will introduce you to the delights, wonders, excitement, passion and joy of commanding a space vessel of your own.

The Flatspace Galaxy

The Flatspace galaxy is a grid, and each square is called a sector. Standard numbered co-ordinates are used to indicate the locations of sectors in the grid, and these often appear in square brackets.

A sector can contain many things, but in the starless Flatspace universe the most important things are space stations. Space stations are islands of warmth and life in an otherwise dead and lonely void. There are many types of space stations from large industrial bases to cosy trading posts. Police stations try to keep order within a galaxy where crime is often high. Small independent bases can often be the home of illegal activity.

Sectors are isolated bubbles of space and life in each galaxy. Ships cannot fly from one sector to another directly but instead use a device called a hyperdrive to jump instantly from one sector to another.

The Scarrid Race

To date, in all of discovered space there are only two intelligent species, and both races compete for the few resources that remain in the post-entropic universe. A cold war exists between the humans and the alien Scarrid.

The Scarrid are a tall, muscular hermaphrodite species. Their society is strictly hierarchical with princes and warrior lords at the top and scavengers at the bottom. The Scarrid are at least as intelligent as humans and the two races have been sharing space and technology for some time, but communication between humans and Scarrid is very difficult because the Scarrid have no vocal chords and communicate exclusively using telepathy.

Scarrid society is brutal with little rule of law. The Scarrid hunt and prey on each other and will take what they need if they can. The Scarrid frequently attack human space stations and humans do the same in return, although neither side is organised enough or committed enough for a full scale war.

Brutal as the Scarrid are, they have strong loyalties to family members and band together in mutually protective clans. The Scarrid never attack a clan brother, and captains will come to the aid of a clan brother in distress. In Scarrid society there is no crime worse than clan betrayal, and the killing of a fellow clan member results in permanent exile from the clan.

Guilds And Ranks

The Pan-Galactic Council of Guildmasters is an independent body that registers the actions of every pilot in the galaxy. Every pilot is carefully monitored and categorised according to his or her activities as a Merchant, Courier, Alien Fighter, Crime Fighter or Outlaw. Points and ranks are assigned to every pilot so that their exact status within each of those guilds is recorded.

Guild information is used by station masters to restrict access to special pieces of equipment. Those who request that enticing ship or advanced weapon may be disappointed unless they have a high enough rank in the right sort of guild.

The Game Status panel shows your dominant (highest scoring) guild and your rank and number of points attained in that guild. An icon allows you to see your score in each of the guilds. It is quite possible to become a master of all guilds.

Certain actions will boost your score in a particular guild. It is up to you to work out what you need to do to increase your rating in the different guilds.

Life In Space

Flying a spaceship is no simple task. In the cold vacuum of space, only technology stops you and your crew from freezing or dying of radiation exposure. Modern space vessels come with inherent heat and light provision, and enough shielding to protect you from the hazards of space. Recycled food (yes, it's brown) and oxygen systems render your vessel capable of enduring a journey of many months. All powered vessels have artificial gravity and inertia dampening systems to stop the listless drifting associated with early space flight.

The heads up display (H.U.D.) gives the modern pilot enough information to do his or her job with prowess and professionalism.

If the captain is the brain, the generator is the heart of any space vessel. Many activities on board a modern space ship require energy including using the thrusters, recharging shields and deploying weapons. Every ship has a generator and it contains a battery that is in constant recharge.

A ring of lights in the bottom left corner of your H.U.D. shows the power status of your ship.

If the generator is damaged, sparks will flitter over your ship. If you or any of your crew are skilled in maintenance, the generator will get repaired eventually. If your generator is damaged during combat, immediate death is probable. In such situations, abandoning ship is recommended.

Basic Flight Controls

On the H.U.D. a gyro cursor hovers around your ship, it looks kind of like two capital T's head to head. This is your desired facing direction. Use the mouse or Rotate Left/Rotate Right controls on your console (default Left/Right Arrows) to rotate this. The ship will turn to face the cursor. Large ships will turn more slowly than small fighter craft, and very large ships can be very slow to turn.

The Thrust control (default Right Mouse Button) will activate the thrusters and push your ship forwards. Double click the thrust control to engage cruise control and lock the thrusters as active until the control is pressed again.

Thrusters will usually drain a little bit of energy. If your batteries are very low, you should ideally stop moving to recharge faster. Rotating does not use any energy.

Navigation

Sooner or later, you will want to explore the galaxy. A Starstandard galactic map computer is built into the console of every ship and shows space stations, and other points of interest like asteroid fields. The novice pilot will see large areas of unexplored sectors. If your ship is fitted with a tracking scanner, targets will be visible providing they are in explored areas.

Press the Activate Map control (default Space) to toggle the map. You can use this control in the space station or ship status screens too.

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Press the Map Legend control (default L) to toggle labels.

Use the arrow keys or the mouse to move the hyperspace destination, represented by the red circle. Information including your current and destination sectors is shown in the top right hand corner of the screen. A message will appear there if your destination is out of range so be on the lookout for it if you move too far. Close the map and it will remember your destination.

When the map is closed, press the Activate Hyperdrive control on your console (default H) to activate the hyperdrive. A green dance of fractions will form and after a short delay you will starstream forwards at a speed of -1. An instant later your vessel will appear in the destination sector.

The main source of power for any hyperdrive is internal, and not linked to the main generator on your ship. This is because hyperdrives require a unique type of energy called gate energy. A hyperdrive will require time to recharge before you can use it again and the H.U.D. includes a vertical bar showing the current energy level of your hyperdrive. The drive is ready to jump when the bar is fully lit.

Targeting

It is hard to get lost in the small sectors of the flat galaxy, but accidents do happen. Targeting is an important skill for any pilot. A ship can have many targets, but as pilot only the primary one is visible (any other targets are strictly for any turret gunners or fighter pilots at your command).

When a target is set, a diamond will appear on your H.U.D.

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floating around your ship like the gyro cursor. This indicates the direction to the target. The name of the target will appear in the top left corner of the H.U.D. for your convenience.

All space stations emit a special homing signal that makes it easy for ships to find them, no matter how distant. Ships or other objects need to be in radar range (or at least visible on the screen) before you can target them.

Press the Target Base control (default B) and your H.U.D. will target a base. Bases always appear on an outer rim of a sector. It is possible, in fact quite likely, that several bases will be in a sector at once. Press the Target Base control more than once to switch between any bases present.

Press the Target Nearest Ship control (default T) to target the nearest object on screen or in radar range, which could be a space vessel or something else like a Staytite cargo pod or even a lump of space rock.

Press the Target Nearest Enemy control (default Y) to target the nearest vessel that is attacking you. This will only work if the enemy is on screen or within radar range.

When a target is selected, press the Previous Target or Next Target controls (default , and .) to cycle through any targets in visible range. Note that target cycling only applies to targets currently visible on the screen.

Press the Clear Targets control (default C) to clear all targets.

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If a scanner is fitted to your ship, you can press the Scan control (default S) to probe your current target for information. Probing others is relatively harmless, but being probed is not very pleasant.

Tractor Beams

Cargo pods, small rocks, life pods and many other things can be pulled, tractored and taken aboard your ship if you have the correct equipment. Scoops, tractors or assimilators are beams fitted to the front of your ship that will suck in the object you target.

Different tractor beams do different things. Some will extract cargo from the target. Some will refine what you scoop, which is useful if you want to make a bit of money by asteroid grabbing. Police forces use a scoop to grab live people by sucking up the yellow and black lifepods that are jettisoned from ships. Some tractor beams don't scoop, they just pull.

To use a tractor beam, first target the item you want to pull. Hold the Tractor Beam control (default Middle Mouse, or Right Shift if your mouse has two buttons) to activate the beam. This will drag the object towards the beam. Point towards the target to get the maximum pull. Keep holding the beam control and you will eventually suck up the object.

Different scoops have different size limits. You cannot hope to scoop up that space station, but scooping a small space ship might just be possible. A standard cargo pod is 5t and life pods are 10t.

Weapons Systems

Intercosmic weapons have come a long way since the stargun plob-cannons of decades past. Modern commanders can choose from a wide array of weaponry made by a cornucopia of manufacturers. Most weapons can be divided into 'guns' and 'missiles'.

Guns

Most vessels have room for one main gun, and this generally faces forwards. Energy weapons, particle beams, burners and recoil resistant rockets are all possible upgrades for the budding entrepreneur. Some weapons will drain more of your energy than others, and some weapons have limited ammunition and ammo packs can be purchased from space stations and stored in the hold.

For weapons that use ammunition, the number of rounds remaining is shown on the weapon information panel, together with a Reload icon.

The Fire control (default Left Mouse Button) will fire your main weapon. You may hold down fire for a continual burst.

Stun Weapons

Stun weapons are used by security forces to disable vessels. Stun weapons damage armour in the conventional way but when the hull is penetrated an electrical shockwave overloads the generator. Once their ship is disabled, most commanders become receptive to demands. Stun weapons will destroy targets without a generator so

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asteroid miners sometimes use them for safety reasons.

Missiles

Many vessels also have missile pylons. Missiles is a general term for 'one shot' weapons. Tools such as the Adams mine might be more bomb than missile and unguided rockets or torpedoes are also available, but most missiles are intelligent homing weapons. Missile pylons can face in any direction, not just forwards (the Starmaster by Fokker has a good example of a tailpipe missile launcher).

The Arm Missile control (default M) will activate a missile. When a missile is armed, its name will appear on the H.U.D. and the green targeting cursors will change to red. Press the Arm Missile control again to cycle through different pylons and associated arms.

Press the Fire Missile control (default Left Mouse, the same as the Fire control) to launch a missile. If a target is selected, a guided missile will seek out that target. For a successful missile lock, the target should be close to your ship when you fire the missile.

Firing a missile at someone is not very friendly and is detected by the target. If a missile is fired at your vessel a red alert is automatically triggered.

Gun Turrets

Larger vessels have gun turrets. These should be manned and equipped with an appropriate turret weapon. Turret gunners will often pick a spread of targets related to your

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primary target. In an asteroid field for example, each gunner will pick a different chunk of rock to shoot at, and if you are under attack from a swarm of vampire fighters, it is every gunner for him (or her) self.

The Order Turrets To Fire control (default O) will order all turret gunners to fire.

The Turrets To Primary control (default X) will instruct all turret gunners to target the primary target to focus all of your firepower on one spot.

Turret gunners are not as gung-ho as pilots and will go off duty if injured.

Fighters

Some ships can carry smaller fighter craft. Fighters add a valuable defensive capability to what are often large and unwieldy transport vessels. Fighters are mass compressed and stored on shelves in 10 centimetre cubes called litres so the physical size of the launch bay is much more of a factor than storage space for fighters. Fighters are low maintenance, armour is automatically repaired when they dock with a parent ship. It is not possible to customise the equipment aboard a fighter.

Fighter pilots are often rough and ready, never say die, bold derring-do hero types who often relish dangerous situations. You can transfer people from the main ship to fighters and vice-versa at any time, but all fighters must have at least a pilot.

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Press the Launch Fighters control (default L) to launch all fighters on a seek and destroy mission. You must have a target to issue this order, fighters cannot merely patrol or perform astrobatics; these people are trained hunter killers. Selecting new targets while fighters are busy fighting is quite possible. The pilots will understand that you mean 'kill this too'.

Use the radio to recall fighters if you need to. Fighters will automatically return to base when they lack targets to destroy.

Compared to capital ships, fighters are small, flimsy, but nimble little things. Using fighters in cramped spaces or dense asteroid fields can be foolish. A stationary base or slow moving hulk is little match for a fighter swarm.

Defensive Systems

Being attacked is, at best, very annoying. If your vessel is scanned, you can normally expect imminent attack and a yellow alert is triggered. If a missile launch is detected, a red alert is triggered. A yellow alert will also occur if armour has been penetrated. The alerts do nothing in themselves but act as a warning.

Press the Red Alert/Cancel Alert control (default A) to turn off an alert, or to activate red alert if no alert is currently active.

There are many ways to evade an attack.

Armour

Sometimes a thin sheet on metal is all that lies between you and a radiation filled vacuum. Armour surrounds your vessel and is eaten away by weapon attacks. Different hull designs have different armour levels and proportions but generally, the rear armour is the thinnest. You can choose to buy additional armour plating for your ship and there are many easy to use plate-it-yourself kits available. Most of these fit on the inside of your ship so you can avoid expensive and dangerous extra vehicular activity. Armour is automatically repaired when you dock at a price of \$1 per unit damaged, but not if you have decided to fit additional armour.

A cluster of wedges in the bottom right corner of the H.U.D. indicates your armour status. Each wedge corresponds to a side of your vessel. Wedges are transparent grey if armour

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is good, yellow if armour is depleted by more than fifty percent, and red if armour is totally destroyed.

Shields

Thermomagnonic chromanantic shields are interdimensional bubbles that absorb damage from weapons and impacts. Shields are depleted by damage and will recharge over time, draining energy from the ship as necessary. Strong shields will glow brightly when hit. Shields are available in various sizes and price ranges from many retail outlets.

A glowing sphere appears over the armour display in the bottom right corner of the H.U.D. to indicate shield strength. The indicator is bright if shields are high and fades to transparent as shields are depleted.

Missile Counter Measures

There are many types of missile, and many types of anti-missile system too. Missiles have a galactic standard technology level number which acts as a rough guide with regards to the sophistication of the missile and its vulnerability to jamming. A missile can usually avoid jamming if the rating is higher than the counter measure.

Press the E.C.M. control (default E) to activate any counter measures installed.

Flares are an ancient form of anti-missile system. A flare launcher is mounted over the thruster port of a spacecraft so ideally the missile to jam should be behind your vessel

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when flares are deployed. If the missile is fooled, it will stop heading for your ship and head for the flare. Note though that a missile will be destroyed when it hits a flare even if it was not fooled. Some very skilled pilots use flares in this way to shoot down high level missiles but that kind of behaviour is very dangerous. Flares are limited in quantity and require restocking every so often, so remember to bring a few spare boxes if you think you'll need them.

Electromagnetic pulse devices (E.M.P. devices) send out a powerful pulse of energy that will destroy every missile within a certain radius. These devices are heavy and powerful and cause a large energy drain as well as potential damage to ship systems, however there is no limit to their power. Larger units include micro generators and so will drain less energy from your ship.

Remote reprogrammers are sophisticated black (and silver) boxes made exclusively by one manufacturer, Xox. A reprogrammer will hack into the electronic brain of a missile in pursuit and convince it to kill something else, usually your primary target. There is something deeply satisfying in destroying a ship with its own missile. If both ships have reprogrammers, you may care to engage in rocket tennis but this extreme sport is not endorsed by Xox.

There are many other ways to avoid missiles, including simple evasive action.

Communications

A radio is fitted as standard to all vessels and sometimes it can mean the difference between life and death. Intercosmic communications allow you to (theoretically) contact any ship in the galaxy and this technology, coupled with a scanner with tracking capability, is how your mapping computer can track ships.

Press the Radio control (default R) to use the radio. A menu allows you to choose what message to send. If a primary target is selected, you may send a message to that target. You can also ask the ship's computer for a status report by activating the internal communications system.

A distress call can often help, and sometimes save your ship, if you are stuck in a deadly struggle with an aggressor. If you fail to get a friendly response from a ship in your sector, a ship in another sector might respond and head your way. If this happens it is wise to keep checking the radio every so often to let them know where you are if they should enter your sector.

If your ship is crippled, and you have no active maintenance crew then your only way out is to radio passing ships and nearby bases and ask for repairs.

Police units can ask for back up when under attack, or even prior to an attack. Officers who come across a particularly tough criminal might like to target them and request back up before deciding to engage. Police stations in the sector

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will launch missiles and scramble fighters in response to such a request so be aware of the cost and danger of a call in those circumstances.

The Scarrid have no radio and will use telepathy to communicate when the Radio control is pressed. This means that communication between humans and Scarrid is not possible. The Scarrid band together in fiercely loyal clans, and Scarrid pilots can call upon their clan brothers for back up or to attack a specific target.

Finally, bear in mind that radio messages are quite easy for bandits and robbers to intercept and trace (in fact last year's annual Galactic and Wireless Federation meeting resulted in so many arrests that the police now permanently stake out their headquarters).

Your radio is a tool you always have. If you seem to be in a dead end, without any visible means of escape, there is probably a way out and it's probably radio shaped.

People Management

People management is important for a space captain and the chances are you will have a lot of weird people on board your ship at some time or another.

If you like good old fashioned discipline, you can jettison anyone into space at any time. This is a rather harsh punishment, but the ability to shove someone into a cramped, spinning, yellow and black striped tetrahedron is sometimes desirable. Do not expect jettisoned crew members to want to work for you again. This practice is illegal, so be careful where and how you do it.

Crew

It's nice being the boss. In the harsh world of the Flatspace galaxy, it is also a good way to survive because your crew can form a sort of 'meat shield' around you when your armour is holed. Crew work on the ship and keep it maintained and running. Crew members are paid a wage each time you dock. Crew are very loyal and if you keep them in pay they will not stab you in the back, panic, quit, or ignore orders.

Each ship has an ideal number of crew to keep it running but you can fly any ship with no crew if you desire. You cannot assign more crew to duty than the ideal number but you can carry extra off duty crew if you have the cabin space on board. Reserve crew still get paid but do no work on the ship.

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You can assign or relieve crew members at any time. Crew are always assigned to duty in strict order, first the pilot or captain, then turret gunners for ships with gun turrets. After that crew are assigned depending on their training, the first crew member becomes the head of department. Fighter pilots and ship captains usually keep on going until they die in ultimate glory, but ordinary crew members stop work if they get injured.

Training

All crew can be trained in one of three main roles, Medical, Maintenance and Security. Turret gunners and the pilot will also act upon their training.

Medical crew heal any other injured people on board. All medically trained crew members will automatically start healing injured people. Injured crew of any type will not be able to do their job, so having some medical staff is always useful.

In exactly the same way, maintenance crew repair damaged ship components although armour can only be repaired while in dock and never by your engineers. If any part of your ship is damaged and you have a healthy maintenance crew member on board, they will eventually repair the component. Note that like healing, repairs can take some time.

Security staff are useful if you have passengers on board, particularly criminals. Criminals do not respect the property or lives of others and employing security guards will help prevent vandalism, sabotage or worse. Not all civilians are

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innocent, and those who carry passengers for high fees should be aware of the possibility that anyone can be a criminal. If you have enough security guards a lockdown is imposed, and that tight control of the ship ensures that passengers behave themselves.

Crew In Combat

When your armour is pierced, crew start getting injured and killed. This can happen to anyone on board. If the captain gets killed it's all over, so if you have a lot of crew then you are less likely to be killed yourself.

Passengers

Passengers are free to wander around the ship and can often be found snooping, lurking, creeping, tripping, bumping and generally roaming. Aliens and passengers with criminal records should be considered dangerous, although in practise criminals rarely make themselves known. Any criminal or captured alien prisoner should be surrendered to the police at the nearest police station. Castaways found adrift in space can also be rescued and released at a trading station.

It is also worth mentioning that a few ship captains engage in slavery or alien prisoner abuse. The Rentex Hull And Astrogation Corporation does not endorse this activity and should remind the reader that slavery is a crime under galactic law.

Cargo And Trading

Trading is a stalwart of every space pilot. Buy cargo from one space station and sell it for a higher price at another, the principle is simple and large profits can be made this way but like any form of trading there is some financial risk involved.

The Q-DEK commodities index is the economic brain of the galactic nerve cluster. Many stocks are listed on the index and almost all space stations permit trading. In the free market economy of Flatspace II, no goods are illegal to trade.

Space stations are living towns and factories. Most stations have some form of industry and often require certain types of goods to produce other types of goods. Cargo is divided into approximate groups to make it easy to determine what types of cargo a station needs and what types of cargo it supplies. The categories are mineral, agricultural, light industrial, heavy industrial and technological.

If a trading scanner is fitted to your ship, scan a base to view the imports and exports. Pilots without trading scanners may use judgement or luck to trade. High quantity, low price cargo is generally an export and low quantity, high price cargo is generally an import.

The Q-DEK is a fluid system and prices can fluctuate. Some stocks are more volatile than others. A good trader can make a profit even when bucking the trend of buying

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exports and selling imports. Pricing information is generally provided by the trading manager including the current price, current growth and the past average price. Note that just because something was historically expensive, it doesn't mean it will be expensive again in future.

Cargo is loaded aboard your vessel in Staytite cargo pods, small shiny tetrahedrons containing at most 5t of goods. The goal of any space pirate is to get those pods and sell the contents.

Stock prices can go down as well as up. Your ship is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loan secured against it. The Q-DEK is part of the Pan-Galactic Financial Services Authority.

The Police

Crime is a serious business. It's serious, and it's a business.

Police patrol craft and reputable space stations detect and judge any crimes that occur in their sector using a complex array of cameras and intelligent systems. Assaulting ships, destroying or ejecting lifepods, murder, demanding money with menaces and other crimes are automatically logged to a public database called the central criminal computer. The system can detect crime but not enforce it and it is the job of the police, or an independent crime fighter, to locate or track down all offenders.

The Flatspace police are always on the look out for recruits. Purchase a police vessel to join the police force. Your local police station has lots more information for the budding detective. A list of the most wanted criminals is normally displayed for the general public to browse. A pilot may also view his or her criminal record and is offered the chance to repay any debt to society in cash.

Flatspace law makes attacking and killing any criminal legal. The system ensures that bounties are paid directly to anyone who captures or kills a criminal. The police and bounty hunters often use stun weapons to persuade criminals to surrender before transporting them to the nearest police station to claim a reward. Needless to say, attacking any innocent ship is a serious crime and it is important to be sure who is innocent and who is guilty.

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Scarrid society is lawless, and bounty hunters form a sort of private police force. Scarrid criminals at large are eventually forgiven, so if a Scarrid criminal steers clear of illegal activity for a long enough period their record will be cleared.

Pirates

Some individuals profit from violence and will attack anyone in the hope of scoring a lucky bounty kill, or in order to plunder any cargo expelled from their victim. A few pirate captains adhere to the unwritten pirates code. This ancient creed states that a pirate will not attack another pirate, and that a pirate will come to the aid of another in distress. Not all pirates are so noble, many are brutes or maniacs with no honour or respect for any code or law.

Outlaws can expect little mercy from the police. The brutal nature of justice in the Flatspace galaxy means that criminals are wary of starting trouble near police stations. Conversely, empty sectors are often dangerous places to visit.

Missions

Various types of mission are available to the galactic entrepreneur. Dock with a space station and the local mission list is full of people who will pay cash for all sorts of services. Assignments often involve taking something or someone somewhere, or capturing someone and returning to the place where the mission was accepted. Sometimes even assassinations are on offer.

Select Missions In Progress from the ship display to see the list of missions you have accepted. When you have accomplished the mission, click the Complete icon to finish it and get paid.

The galaxy is big, and home to lots and lots of space ships. For some missions, the ability to track one individual target ship is really important. A scanner with tracking ability enables the long range detection of any vessel. The vessel will appear on your Starstandard galactic map when an appropriate mission is accepted. Note that targets in unexplored sectors will not be visible, and also be aware that bases or other targets that are normally visible on the map will have no special highlighting when tracked.

The galaxy is also dangerous, and it is quite possible that the man you were going to rescue will get blown to mincemeat before you even get there. If a contract is out on a life, an assassin will have to compete with others to get to the kill first.

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Assassination is both illegal and difficult. Novice assassins should be careful not to accept assignments that are too far away or too difficult. Professionals know that their life is too high a price to pay for any job.

APPENDIX

Custom Games

A custom game gives you the opportunity to change the game settings and create a galaxy of your liking.

The galaxy type can be set in the top setting.

In the space station section, you can select whether space stations are removed permanently if destroyed (this is the default in the normal game) or respawn. You can also select the quantity and visibility status of the space stations. By default human pirate bases and all Scarrid bases are hidden if you choose a human character, and all human bases are hidden and all Scarrid bases are visible if you play as a Scarrid.

You can also select a fixed, random or seeded universe. A fixed universe is the same each time, a random universe is different each time, and a seeded universe is the same if you use the same seed. The seed is a word (any word) that can be typed into the text box. If you find a particularly good map then you can use the same word to generate it each time if you use a seeded universe.

Finally you can set the probability of a sector containing asteroids or nebulae. The default for the normal game is 20%.

A guide to the different custom galaxy types now follows:

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Humans vs Scarrid (default)

The galaxy is divided into the human and Scarrid quadrants. All human professions are present in this galaxy, and the Scarrid feature pirate bases, pirates, miners and bounty hunters only.

The Chaos Wars

This is an war-like galaxy. Human and Scarrid sectors are distributed evenly throughout the galaxy. All human professions are present, and all Scarrid professions and space station types. Unlike humans, the Scarrid have no police but this is a relatively evenly matched battle.

Humans Only (Classic Flatspace)

Like the first Flatspace game, this galaxy features no scarrid and all human professions and space station types.

Humans Without Pirates (Easy)

A easy galaxy that suits traders and other peaceful professions. There are no Scarrid in this galaxy and no pirates.

Police And Pirates Only

A galaxy of cops and robbers. There are no Scarrid in this galaxy and only police and pirates. There are more pirates than police in this galaxy and it is a challenge to survive with any career other than bounty hunter or police officer.

Trading is very difficult because there are no trading bases, only independent outposts.

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Lawless (Hard)

The only galaxy containing an equal mix of human and Scarrid types. Half of the population are pirates, one quarter are bounty hunters, and traders, couriers and miners make up the rest. There are no police and the galaxy is divided into human and Scarrid quadrants.

Warriors vs. Humanity

There are no human pirates in this galaxy but all of the Scarrid are warriors. As a human the main enemy are Scarrid because the Scarrid are effectively lawless and can hunt humans easily. Human and Scarrid sectors are distributed evenly throughout the galaxy.

Scarrid Only

A galaxy featuring no humans, only Scarrid. This is similar to a humans only galaxy except that the Scarrid have no police and have more bounty hunters instead. Scarrid trading stations are more rare than pirate bases, and unlike human bases, Scarrid bases all look alike from the outside making a trading career difficult.

Default Control Keys

Basic Controls

In Game Help: F1

Ship Status: Esc

Flight/Weapons

Rotate Left: Left Arrow (or Mouse)

Rotate Right: Right Arrow (or Mouse)

Fire: Left Mouse Button

Thrust (Double Click To Lock): Right Mouse Button

Tractor Beam: Middle Mouse (or Right Shift key if your mouse has two buttons)

Order Turret Gunners To Fire/Ceasefire: O

Turrets To Primary: X

Launch Fighters: L (on a mission to destroy the primary target)

Missiles

Arm/Disarm Missile: M

Fire Armed Missile: Left Mouse Button

Deploy Counter Measures: E

Targeting

Target Nearest Ship: T (nearest on radar or on screen)

Target Nearest Enemy: Y (nearest on radar or on screen)

Target Base: B

Next Target: . (next on screen)

Previous Target: , (previous on screen)

Clear Targets: C

Scan Target: S

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Map

Activate Hyperdrive: H (jump to the target set on the map)

Activate Map: Space

Map Up: Up Arrow (or mouse)

Map Right: Right Arrow (or mouse)

Map Down: Down Arrow (or mouse)

Map Left: Left Arrow (or mouse)

Map Legend: L (when map is active)

Radio

Radio/Communications: R

Request Docking Permission or Initiate Docking: D

Emergency Keys

Sirens On/Off: I (ships with sirens only)

Red Alert/Cancel Alert: A

Jettison Escape Pod: J

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Credits

The Flatspace games were designed and developed by Mark Sheeky. The first Flatspace game took approximately 18 months to develop, and Flatspace II another 18 months. Many ideas, playtesting, proofreading, and moral support came from Andrew Williams.

Steve Blanch thought up most of the Scarrid ship names, and along with Mark Fassett helped with playtesting and made suggestions. Hayden Yale helped with compatibility testing.

The original Windows install system used was NSIS by Nullsoft. The music was created using Noise Station audio software, which Mark also designed and developed. The procedural textures were created using Genetica 2.0 Pro by Spiral Graphics.

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The official Flatspace website is www.lostinflatspace.com.

About

About Cornutopia

All of the Cornutopia games were designed and programmed by me, Mark Sheeky.

I began programming games in the 1980s on my first home computer, a Dragon 32. Game programming became an addiction and obsession, and this continued throughout the 1990s, programming many Public Domain and Shareware games for the Commodore Amiga computer.

My first Windows PC game was Arcangel in 1999, a squad level strategy game, and in 2002 I decided to publish my own games under the name Cornutopia Software.

I gradually transitioned into becoming an artist, and have painted over 500 oil paintings, composed and recorded over 30 albums of music, and written a few books, but game programming was my first passion, and this complex and supremely difficult task remains a solid foundation on which to build a mind.

You can find out more about my artwork, and browse my complete software catalogue on www.marksheeky.com. Search for Mark Sheeky on Amazon to discover more of my books and music.

Other Games

Visit the Cornutopia Software website or search for Mark Sheeky to see more titles. The current Cornutopia games catalogue is:

Thermonuclear Domination
Arcangel: The Legacy Of Peace
Roton
Martian Rover Patrol
Trax
Noise Station
Radioactive
Breakout Velocity
Fallout Velocity
Bool
Yinyang
Outliner
Firefly
Flatspace
Taskforce: The Mutants Of October Morgane
Future Pool
Gunstorm
Flatspace II
Future Snooker
Gunstorm II
Flatspace III

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