

N^{**3**}

How to load:

To play this demo you need a ZX Spectrum +3 with the ULAplus. You can use emulators like SpecEmu, Es.ppectrum, Spectramine or others allowing this hardware configuration. So, before loading the program, ENABLE the ULAplus in the configuration of the emulator. I recommend too, if your emulator has this option, to DISABLE fast load (from disk), as I use some of the loading times as “pauses” while presenting some screens or texts. With real hardware, modern devices like ZX-UNO, eLeMeNt ZX or ZX Sizif-512 allow it. With more traditional machines, peripherals like ZX-HD will make happy your ZX Spectrum.

First, enter the SIDE B of the disk (labeled as “INTRO”), in the disk unit and select “LOADER” in the main menu. I can't say it's the definitive version, but more or less is the idea. As I've stopped and re-started this project sooo many times, changing the argument and mixing the remains of the previous idea with the new, the result is a nice soup of shit, so you better don't care very much. The graphics are not mine, they come from a lot of games. The machine code scroll routine isn't mine, I can't remember if it's from a magazine. The first planetary animation is from OUTLET Magazine, Issue 94 (1995). The second planetary animation is from 16/48 Tape Magazine, Issue 12 (December 1984). Now you can reset the computer and place the SIDE A of the disk (labeled as “GAME”) in the disk unit and select “LOADER” in the main menu.

The game:

Well, I would call it a “walking demo”, as you can only walk here and there. The idea was to recreate a NES-like or GB-like JRPG, but I've disabled (or not yet programmed) some of the things: random combats (the sauce of that type of games, they should be present in the sewers and corridors) aren't enabled, so you can walk freely in these areas without danger. As you will need money only to buy weapons and shields for the statistics of the combats, and combats aren't enabled, the management of money is too mainly disabled. In the theoretical definitive version you will win money defeating the random monsters. In sewers and corridors you can find yellow boxes with money too (but they are too non-functional at moment). So you can't win money, sorry (see the FAQ).

The by-default move keys are QAOP. Pressing the key I you will access the main menu (EXIT – STATS – ITEMS – TARGET). You can move the pointer with OP and select an option with SPACE.

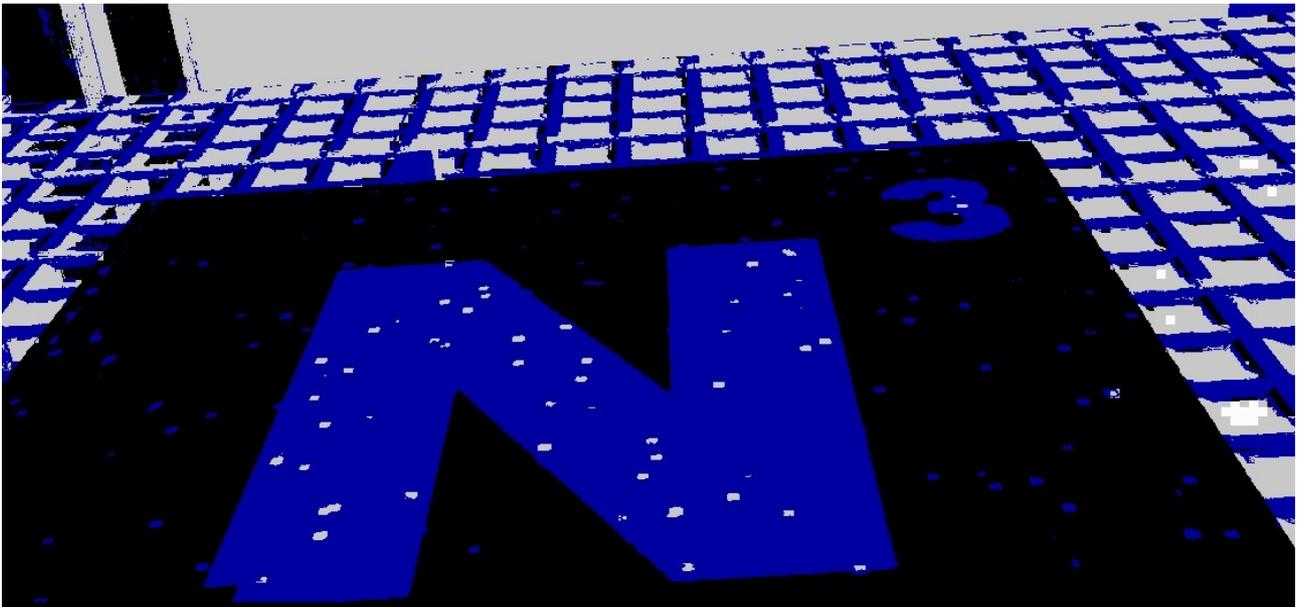
- EXIT means “exit from the menu and return to the game”
- STATS, is a review screen with graphic boxes with information about your statistics. The system is at moment very simple, this type of game has normally a lot more of character attributes, here I only use present Health Points (and max. Health Points, not show) and Psy Points (and max. Psy Points, not show) both linked to the Level (and the Level linked with the Experience Points), carrying a type of weapon and of shield (adding the first Attack Points and the second Defense Points to the Defense Points linked with your Level). The Psy Point are usually linked in that type of games with a second catalog of attacks in combat, but I'm thinking to manage them in a different way with other use, or to make it out of the system. The idea was to allow a Party of max. four members. If you look at the boxes on screen you will see a letter in one of the corners of the boxes (can be A, B, C, or D). Pressing the key of the member-box, will show another review, but I think I will remove this second informative screen, I'm not totally happy with it. Press any key (twice in the first review, one time in the second) to return to the game.

- ITEMS, shows the inventory. With QA you can move the pointer, and with SPACE select one of the options:
 - EXIT, return to the game
 - NEXT, only useful if you are carrying more than 12 different type of items. The system allows you to carry max. 9 units of 24 type of items.
 - Selecting an item of the list (with SPACE) will give the options EXIT-USE-EQUIP-DROP. The USE option at moment is not really implemented (you simply drop the thing). EQUIP is allowed only with weapon-type or shield-type items (while this unit of that type of items is equipped, don't count in the inventory). You can DROP (unit by unit) any type of item available in the inventory.
- TARGET, a simple reminder of what is your mission at moment.

While you are walking in the map, standing near of the computer terminals or the static-walking guys in the scenery and pressing SPACE, you will interact with them. It was planned, the texts of the computers will give you some clues, but at moment they are only some pseudo-philosophical gibberish. Idiotic, I know, but looks nice. The guys can be standard passengers (they have normally a single wording that, in some cases should be informative/relevant for the progress in the game) or one special of the WEAPONS-SHIELDS-SHOP-HEALTH-RESTORE type. The first four types allow you to buy things, and in SHOP you can too shell things, but the shell-part is not developed at moment. Somewhere you will see a guy near something like capsules, he is of the RESTORE type, this should restore the max. HP and PSY (not implemented at moment, sorry, but without combats you can't die, so not really a big problem in this demo version) and save to disk a small file, to be used as restore-point if you die or quits the game and reloads it other day (but, well, not implemented, it's in my "to do" list).

Walkthrough:

If you go to the East of the map, from you start position, you will see a guy repairing a sewer entry. If you lost your time speaking with the other guys in the map, I think one of them should give you the clue to go to the LAB-4 through the sewer (but I'm not sure if I've programmed it, I think yes). Go to the North, somewhere is a door connecting the Bridge with the Sector-B. Not very far for the entrance of the Sector-B you will find other guy. He says you he will speak with the guy of the sewer entry to allow you access. Return to where he is and he will be incorporated in the party (useless at this point). Enter in the sewers system. This is a simple labyrinth linking different maps, it's easy. Find the door to the LAB-4. When reached the LAB-4, you will be presented with some cutscenes with a bit of more bla-bla-bla. You will be asked to reach the Central Computer Room (or something so), go to the north of the Sector-B, somewhere is a door to access to the corridors. As the BASIC code occupies around 17K in RAM, and my RAMTOP is at 44084, my idea is to use some bottleneck somewhere to load from disk different parts of the BASIC core.



FAQ:

– **Will this game sometime be finished and see the light?**

– Not really sure.

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– **Why the music sounds like composed by a drunk monkey?**

– Next question, please.

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– **I'm a compulsive buyer, I need to buy.**

– Then press “I” to see the menu and press BREAK. Go to the BASIC editor and type POKE 65409, 255 and GO TO 1380 to return to the game with loads of money to buy things, but as said, for this demo, it's the same to have one or no one weapon and/or shield equipped. And the other things are useless, as they not have any effect.

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– **The main protagonist walk very slow, I like run!**

– Then as in the previous Question, BREAK and go to the BASIC editor, and change the speed with POKE 51174,x, the default speed is 4, if you type POKE 51174,0 then will go faster, but the music will sound slower. Remember to type GO TO 1380 to return to the game.

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– **Why are all texts so with broken English full of misspellings and weird wordings?**

– It's totally intentional, to recreate the flavour of famous Japanese videogames known too for their broken English (remember: “**All your base are belong to us**”). And with this README, the same thing. Totally intentional.

More about:

The demo uses the graphic Engine CharAde (Jason J. Railton, 2015) and the music Engine Music Maestro (Torchraven Ltd., 1989). The fullscreen static images have been edited with ZX Paintbrush (Claus Jahn, 2015) and most of them compressed with ZXSC (Tom Dalby, 2018, 2020).

The main part of the code is interpreted BASIC, with some compiled BASIC (Hisoft) mixed, and small pieces of very simple machine code or tricks here and there.

2022, +3code, for WOOT 2022

