

LUNA TICKS

USER MANUAL



Distributed by

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LUNA TICKS

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The Plot

The plot is simple - you have taken out a mining concession on an asteroid. This has cost you big bucks, and you need to make regular repayments on your loan to the mining company who owns this hunk of rock. The company has provided you with a manufacturing plant, some Cutter Orbs, and a supply of Ticks (the Tick is your mining vehicle). The company hopes that you will be successful in making them lots of credits, and don't really care how you do it.

The game rules are pretty much what you decide they should be, or what you decide is expedient at the time....

System Requirements

To play *Luna Ticks*, you will need a 486/33 PC or better (Pentium recommended), with 8Mb of RAM (...a 4Mb machine should be able to play with no sound, but who wants that?), a CD-ROM drive, and a hard drive with 1Mb free space for the partial installation necessary.

Windows 95: Although LunaTicks is a DOS game, it is also Windows 95-compliant, and will take advantage of AutoPlay. However, it runs better and faster from true DOS!

Luna Ticks has a serial game mode, for which you will need either a null-modem cable or a modem link, and an IPX network mode, for which you will need a network card and IPX software.

Installing

MS-DOS:

Luna Ticks requires a partial installation to your hard drive, but will run direct from the CD - you must have the CD in the drive to play.

Insert the CD in your CD drive and change to that drive. From the commandline prompt, type: INSTALL [Enter] to start the partial installation.

After installing, playing the game at any time is simply a matter of changing to the installed directory and typing SETUP [Enter] to configure your sound options (first time only), typing LUNA [Enter] for a single-player game, or SETUP [Enter] to launch either a Serial or Network game.

Windows 95:

If you have AutoPlay enabled, A LunaTicks requester will appear onscreen when you insert the CD into your drive - choose Install (...just configuration files), Setup (...for sound and screen options), Multi (for Serial or Network games), or Play. Please note that Windows 95 users cannot launch a serial or network game directly from SETUP as DOS users can - you must use the Win95 AutoPlay requester. See Pages 16 & 17 for details.

If you have AutoPlay disabled, select Start / Run - run LTAUTOPL.EXE on the CD - follow the above steps.

This Windows 95 setup is provided because an increasing number of computers are being sold with no DOS drivers for the CD drive. Luna Ticks is a DOS game, and needs a CD drive! The game will run faster from true DOS, but will run acceptably from Windows 95. The best answer is to obtain DOS drivers for your CD drive!

Ten-Minute Tutor

Luna Ticks has a "Ten-Minute Tutor" for first-time users, so they can become quickly accustomed to the elementary strategies of the game. When you start **Luna Ticks** for the first time, the option to enable this will be offered automatically - the Ten-Minute Tutor displays helpful text messages at appropriate times, to help you to understand the gameplay needs.

On subsequent games, you may choose to enable this option by selecting the Help screen either with the [F1] key or by clicking on the HELP button which is located on the extended bottom screen (...scrolls up when you click near the bottom of the gameplay screen). This screen offers a mouse-click menu of four items:

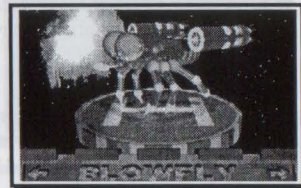
- ☒ Viewing the LunaTick's Guide to the Galaxy for detailed help and advice
- ☒ Turning on or off the 10-minute Tutor
- ☒ Viewing the list of active gameplay keys
- ☒ Exiting back to the game.

Main Menu

Tick Select

To select the tick you'd like to use, use the mouse to click on left / right arrows to select between possible ticks. When the desired tick has been selected, click on its name to accept it. All ticks have identical performance specifications, but grab objects in different locations, so it's just a matter of taste.

NOTE: tick colour is assigned by the game depending on where your base is located within the first level. In single player games, this is randomly allocated at start of game.



Zone Select

To select the zone you wish to play in, use the mouse to click on left / right arrows to select between possible zones. When the desired zone has been selected, click on its name to accept it. Each zone has 5 levels which can be played (and maybe even a few hidden levels for you to find!). Starting level can be selected from 'Level Select' option of main menu

NOTE: level difficulty does not depend on level number! When a level is completed you will proceed to the next level in the zone (e.g. if on level 2, you go to level 3... if on level 5, you go to level 1).

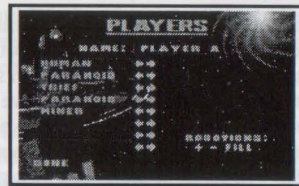


Start Game

When you have selected your Tick, zone and starting level, selecting this option will start a new game. This brings up two menus :-

1. Player Configuration

Select what types of computer players will be competing, and enter your game name (your name will usually be remembered by the game from any previous games).



You can have as many (8 player max. including you and other humans) or as few as you like, controlled by clicking on the +/- buttons under the 'ROBOTICKS' heading (more players = more chaos). The first slots will be filled by 'HUMAN' players, IPX games with 8 players CANNOT have any Roboticks as all slots are filled. All empty slots can be filled with a random selection by clicking on 'fill'. Robotick types can be changed by clicking on the left / right arrows beside the player slot.

Available Robotick types are:

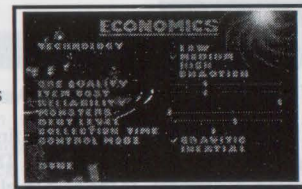
- ☒ **Moron** - very dumb and unexciting. Does without thinking.
- ☒ **Psychotick** - plans complex (often unpleasant) actions against opposition.
- ☒ **Paranoid** - can never have enough weapons. Major participant in arms race. Best left alone.
- ☒ **Einstein** - Numerical whiz who will always make best possible choice. Very hard to beat.
- ☒ **Thief** - kleptomaniac extremus! If its not nailed down (often even if it is) he'll steal it from you.
- ☒ **Banker** - Boring Accountant / Volvo-driver type - does everything 'carefully'.
- ☒ **Miner** - loves digging dirt and making holes in things.
- ☒ **Killer** - who cares about making money? KILL KILL KILL!!!!

When everything here is to your liking, click on 'DONE' to continue.

- ☒ When starting out for the first time, try starting with no Robotick players (just you and any network buddies) to see what different items do without being overrun!

2. Economics Menu

This allows you to change environment parameters to get different gameplay. Environment variables that can be modified are:-



- ☒ **Tech level** - availability of items (all available on maximum technology, few on minimum technology)
- ☒ **Ore Quality** - high = more ore per load, low = less ore per load
- ☒ **Item Cost** - high = expensive items, low = cheap items
- ☒ **Reliability** - Number of lemons produced (0-50%). A lemon is just that - a sour fruit good for throwing at undesirables.
- ☒ **Monster Rate** - number of monsters (0-10) (see 'Monsters!')
- ☒ **Debt Level** - amount of advance from credit company
- ☒ **Collection Time** - Number of seconds between debt collector arrivals (1-10 minutes).
- ☒ **Control mode** - toggle between gravitic (easy) and inertial (hard)

When these options are to your satisfaction, click on 'DONE' to enter game.

Playing

At the start of a new game you will see:-

Your Tick, your Manufacturing Facility (aka your base), 3 Cutter orbs

The aim of each level is to be the first to pay off your debt to the credit company and stop everyone else from doing so. The first player to complete paying off their debt will cause a "wormhole" to the next level to open - this is often hidden beneath rock, requiring excavation for access. As soon as any human player enters the wormhole the level is finished - all scores are tallied.

Debt is paid off in 'Credit Pods' manufactured by your base (See 'Items!'), and is collected at regular intervals by the dreaded 'Debt Collector' (shooting at him may be fun, but totally ineffective). Each collection will occur after your 'ETA' counter has reached 0, and costs you 1 Credit Pod in interest each time. Any further pods you own at that time will reduce your debt. Failure to have at least 1 Credit Pod at collection time incurs a 10-credit penalty and loss of 1500 units of ore (*note:* if you don't have 1500 units of ore, a further 10-credit penalty is incurred!). Your present credit level (loan balance due to be paid...) is displayed on the right hand side of screen.

- ☒ Making lots of credit pods each time will accelerate your credit payoff, and force opponents to try and match you!

Your base is immortal and will continue to operate while you are still a player in the game, but its efficiency level can be reduced by damage sustained during battle. Efficiency is represented by a neon green 'bar' in the base centre and can be increased by building 'Efficiency modules' (see 'Making Items!'). Efficiency is how fast your base can process ore when emptying a cutter orb or manufacturing an item. Efficiency and Ore level are displayed on the right hand side of screen.



Mining



Cutter orbs are used to mine 'ore resources' from the various walls of the level - full orbs are processed in your base. Using orbs is easy - simply pick it up, face a tasty looking bit of rock and fire it into the rock (*BEWARE* - ore content of rock varies for different types, as does hardness. Some rock is so tough orbs cannot cut into it! You'll learn what's good and bad rock pretty quickly...). When the orb has filled up with ore it will back up to where you released it and wait for pickup.

When you have time, just cart or "fire" the waiting orb over to your base, releasing it near the factory intake and your base will extract its ore, then spit it out the ejector chute ready for re-use (the more efficiency modules your base has, the less time this takes). The more orbs you own the faster you can mine, so making more (or stealing them - we didn't say you HAD to be honest, did we?) will make life easier. (*NOTE:* your base can process only 5 orbs at any one time. Full orbs waiting for pickup are easy pickings for other less-than-honest players.)



- ☒ Stealing things (like Cutter Orbs / Credit Pods) is a good way to get things quick, but will bring the wrath of the other players down on you if you are caught, and defense units can pack a wallop! You do want to survive, don't you?

Making Items!



In order to help you along in your task there are a large collection of items you can make. All possible items are displayed on the ITEM menu to the left of the game screen when the ITEM button is depressed. The number of items available depends upon the technology level (Chaotick technology = all items) chosen during game startup. The currently selected item is displayed under icons with its cost shown in ore units. You can start to manufacture an item that requires more ore than you possess, but manufacture will stop when ore runs out and may be resumed when more ore is available. The item currently under manufacture is displayed in your base status display on the right hand side of screen.

Items are selected by clicking on its icon or clicking on << or >> buttons. Clicking on START will start / continue production, clicking on it again will stop production.

Items are available in 4 categories:-

1. Constuction Items (Blue Icons) - items required for day-to-day running of your mining concession. Items are :-

- ✓ Fuel - Food for your gas-guzzler. Run out of fuel and you're stuck!
- ✓ Energy - batteries for your plasma cannon and shields. Whenever you fire or are hit by something, energy is depleted.
- ✓ Extra Ship - another spare tick in case current one gets roasted. If you die without one and do not have enough ore to make one, you are out of the game!
- ✓ Efficiency module - make your base run faster. You can't make more than 3.
- ✓ Stone Block - wall-in holes for security. Press fire to fuse in place.
- ✓ Cutter Orb - make a new orb to replace / augment others.
- ✓ Credit Pod - Must make these for Debt Collectors.

2. Defense Items (Red Icons) - used to upgrade security of your installation :-

- ✓ Missile Base - tracks and fires 'Homer' (incredibly stupid) missiles at intruders - BEWARE: Missiles will go for anything in their way when launched!
- ✓ Autocannon - self tracking plasma cannon.
- ✓ Smart Cannon - Autocannon fitted with pursuit thrusters to chase opposition.
- ✓ Mine - KABLOOIE!
- ✓ Smart Mine - chase intruder then KABLOOIE!
- ✓ Slice 'n Dice - Ship-size food processor unit to mash intruders.
- ✓ Gravity Well - sucks in items, can be plugged together to make stronger wells (MAXIMUM 3 - ANYMORE WILL CAUSE A BLACK HOLE!)
(NOTE: Do not work on ships in Gravitic control mode)
- ✓ Shield module - High intensity force field to protect valuable stuff.
- ✓ Sling gate - cross this baby and get a free warp speed ride.

3. General items (Yellow Icons) - just generally useful items :-

- ✓ Transporter - beams full cutter orbs back to it - place output over intake to base and the orbs will zap inside as soon as they have backed off rock.
- ✓ Afterburner - REALLY big rocket motor for a ride.
- ✓ LeBomb - why should the French have all the atomic fun? Has ten-second fuse before detonating.
- ✓ M.A.D. Bomb - Mutually Assured Destruction - Instant detonation, kills everything on screen including you.
- ✓ Poor Cloak - become semitransparent and hard to track - lasts until fire is pressed again.
- ✓ Good Cloak - better (and more expensive) version of poor cloak.
- ✓ Phasic Cloak - Extremely good cloak - allows you to pass through rock, lasts for 30 seconds OR until fire is pressed again.
- ✓ Spy Camera - place these dudes around to keep a eye on opposition (hold [TAB] to activate, +/- (top of keyboard) to select camera). Maximum of 5 at any time.
- ✓ Rebounder - become a super ball whilst holding it. (GREAT fun in inertial mode)
- ✓ Thumper - Antimatter-powered pogo stick for a fast (if bumpy) ride.
- ✓ Drillist's Dream - Drill holes through soft rock to gain access to things. Explodes when worn out.
- ✓ The Boppit - Try it and see.

- ✓ 2RBG - The Really Really Big Gun - king size 6 shooter, but watch for the recoil!
- ✓ Tractor Beam - pulls hard to get things into range.
- ✓ Jump Gates - made in pairs - allows you to warp between points, takes 5 seconds to recharge. Grab by bottom coil.
- ✓ Cargo Pod - drop up to 4 items in here to carry. Fire while carrying drops them out again.

4. Ship UpgradesPacks (Green Icons) - these make your machine the zippiest tick in the system. They last until your tick is destroyed. You must grab and use package to make it work.

- ✓ Power Upgrade - allow you to store more power (unlimited usage).
- ✓ Fuel Upgrade - allow you to store more fuel (unlimited usage).
- ✓ Rebound shot - replaces main cannon with elasto-plasma cannon that bounces off walls.
- ✓ Repulsor - bends plasma globs away from you.
- ✓ 3 way fire - 2 extra plasma cannons on your nose.
- ✓ Rear cannon - And one out there too.
- ✓ Smart cannon - fires at nearest enemy.
- ✓ Turbo fire - give you continuous fire ability on all weapons (chews the energy too!)
- ✓ Missiles - Fits 'Homer' missile launchers.
- ✓ Wing blades - orbiting set of cutters that damage other ticks and intercept plasma fire (unlimited usage).
- ✓ Multibot - orbiting drone that targets and automatically shoots at enemy.
- ✓ Targeting computer - shows where nearest player is and their colour.

Items are used by pressing fire whilst carrying them. Not all items are player-usable (e.g. Transporter).

There are also Bonus items hidden around the levels.

Messages

Messages are generated by the game and other players (include Roboticks). They are displayed at the bottom of the game window for 10 seconds or until another message comes through. History of last 7 messages is kept in 'History' window.

Network/Serial Players can enter a message by pressing [M] during play and entering message (echoed at screen top). Message can be sent to everyone (press enter at end) or to a specified player (0-7 on keypad). [Del] will abandon message.

To access history window and sound controls click at screen bottom. Clicking at top of reduced play area restores screen to full size.

Finishing a level

When someone completes paying off their debt a 'Wormhole' will open at a random location on the current map, leading to next level. When a human-controlled tick enters this, all players are warped to next level. On some levels, Secret wormholes are hidden that will take you to secret levels of the game.

Scoring

Points are awarded for making and stealing things. You get 10% of item cost for manufacturing items, 5% for stealing items (who says crime doesn't pay?).

50 Points are lost when you are killed.

Scores (and relative rank) is visible on Rankings menu (click on RANKINGS button on LHS of screen).

Death

If you're an unlucky tick and get fried, you have several options :-

- ☒ If you have any spare ticks, you are returned to base in a new tick (all upgrades are lost).
- ☒ If you don't have a spare tick, but you have sufficient ore to make one, one is instantly made (and ore debited from your base).
- ☒ If none of the above - you're history and your base explodes... GAME OVER! In IPX/SERIAL games, you become a spectator (aka FINK PATROL) until start of next level where you are miraculously re-incarnated (score is reset to 0).

Keyboard Controls

Use these keys to control your Tick and access game features:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| [LEFT/RIGHT] - Turn your tick | [UP/DOWN] - Fire thusters |
| [ALT] - Grab and release item | [CTRL] - Fire weapons/Use held item |
| [</>] - Select item to make | [ENTER] - Start/Stop manufacture |
| [BKSPACE] - Tick Autodestruct | [M] - Enter a message |
| [PGDN] - Access message history | [PGUP] - Restore Game screen |
| [F1] - Help Screens | [F2] - Save game |
| [F3] - Load game | [F4] - PCX Screen grab |
| [F9] - Toggle Joystick/Gamepad support | [F10] - Detail level |

Serial Games

DOS:

If you have a standard comm port setup, run SETUP.EXE and select 'Serial Game' - select the desired comm. port setup (*NOTE:* one player must be Player #0 and the other Player #1)

Select the "Start Game" button to launch your game.

If you have an unusual comm. port setup, then you must run LunaTicks from the DOS commandline prompt with the following parameters:

LUNA -SERIAL -BASE nn -IRQ xx -BAUD yy -IAM zz [Enter] - where nn is a port address in Hex (e.g. 0x3f8), xx is an IRQ interrupt, yy is a Baud speed, and zz is your Player Number (either 0 or 1).

Only player 0 will have access to game configuration menus.

Windows 95:

If you wish to change any of your serial game settings, run SETUP. When you select "Start Game" you will be returned to the Win95 AutoPlay requester - here you must select "Multi" to launch a serial game.

IPX Network Games

(LSL.COM, Network card driver and IPXODI.COM must be loaded before an IPX network game can run!)

DOS:

Run SETUP.EXE and select your configuration. Use the default socket unless you have trouble or another copy of Luna Ticks is running on that socket. Each player must select a different player number (you can only pick valid numbers - e.g. in a 4 player game you can only be players 0-3). Player 0 is host and will be able to set up the style of game.

Windows 95:

If you wish to change any of your IPX game settings, run SETUP. When you select "Start Game" you will be returned to the Win95 AutoPlay requester - here you must select "Multi" to launch a serial game.

In IPX games, you can be one of three player types :-

Interactive (normal player)

Spy - in this mode you follow around other players and spy on them. Use left/right arrows to select the player you want to watch. You can then use the message system as normal to send messages privately or publicly about what your victim is doing...

Spectator - This is similar to spy, but you can wander anywhere you wish using the arrow keys to scroll the map. You have much greater snoop ability, but you can only send messages to everybody (private messages get bounced to everyone). If you die in a network game you will be a spectator until the start of the next level.

Terminal Taunts and Text Macros

In network modes you can send text macros or Digital insults to your opposition. Typing keys [1]...[0] on your keyboard will load a text macro to send to someone with normal send keys. <SHIFT> [1]...[0] will send a Terminal Taunt VOC file.

The game comes with a TT file and VOCs all set up, but you can put your own in.

To do this you:-

- ☒ Copy the LUNA.TT file from game directory on CD-ROM into install directory on your HDD.
- ☒ Use a text editor to edit the macro strings and VOC files for Terminal Taunts (NOTE: you must specify FULL paths on the VOC files). Text macros can be unique to each machine, but VOC files must be identical on each machine else you will not get correct taunts.

Customer Assistance

As a registered user of Luna Ticks, you are entitled to customer assistance from Manacomm if you get stuck with a technical problem. You can contact Manacomm's Customer Assistance department in Brisbane on (07) 3870 4900 between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, or fax (07) 3870 9440 anytime.

Email if you prefer to: m_assist@manac.com.au

If you would rather write, address your letter to:

Customer Support
Manacomm Pty Ltd
 P.O.Box 1297
 MILTON 4064
 AUSTRALIA

Please be at or near your computer, if possible, when you contact Manacomm, and be prepared, if required, to provide:

- ☒ Brand name / model of your system, mouse, video card;
- ☒ Operating system and version;
- ☒ A description of your problem, how it occurred, & how to reproduce it.

Credits

Terraform Software Systems remind you that **Luna Ticks** is a commercial product - don't be a pirate! The authors rely on the sale of the game for their income.

Design & Programming: T. Groth
 Artwork & Sound: L. Dillon
 Music: E. Beaumont
 Special thanks to: B. Morrison