

SPECTRUM

48K



Melbourne
House

STARION

by David Webb

STARION

1. INTRODUCTION

STARION is a multi-dimensional 243-zone space-time travel simulation requiring reflex skills, analytical powers, stamina and a keen sense of adventure.

The game utilises the most advanced vector graphics system ever developed for a home computer, and will run on any 48K ZX Spectrum or Spectrum+. Control may be by either the keyboard or any popular joystick. The ZX Printer may also be used for making copies of the screen.

2. LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the cassette in your player, making sure that it is rewound to the start and that the EAR socket of your Spectrum or Spectrum+ is connected to that of the tape player, as detailed in the Spectrum manual.

2. Enter the command LOAD "starion" or just LOAD "" then press the ENTER key.

3. Start the tape player. The game will now load automatically.

4. In case of difficulty, alter the volume level and consult your Spectrum manual.

3. SCENARIO

The year is 2010 and your name is Starion. Fresh out of Space Academy, you have been selected as their brightest pupil to pilot the world's first timeship, the S.S. Stardate. Your mission: to boldly go back in time and correct the devastation wrought in the Space-time continuum by evil aliens from all the other worlds that have achieved time travel before you.

As you progress through the game, your ability as a pilot increases. You are rewarded with promotion through the ranks from Novice to Supreme Commander. If and when you finally reach 'Event Zero' before the beginning of time (event one), then you become the earliest thing to exist and must by default assume the ultimate title of CREATOR of all that follows.

4. CONTROLS

The main controls for your ship are as follows:

Bank left:	I	Accelerate:	E
Bank Right:	P	Decelerate:	Q
Dive:	W	Fire laser:	N
Climb:	C		

In addition the following controls may be useful:

Target sights on/off:	T
Sound on/off:	S
COPY screen to ZX Printer:	Z
Hold action/continue:	H
Status report:	R
Abort Game:	CAPS SHIFT and SPACE

You may also select your own choice of control keys or joystick.

5. THE NATURE OF SPACE-TIME . . .

The space-time continuum is constructed of 3 'time blocks' and each time block is a 3x3 array of 'time grids'. Each time grid is a 3x3 arrangement of time zones. Taking into account the 3 dimensions of space itself, there are thus 243 time zones in 8 dimensions.

Each time zone represents the state of the observable universe during a given year in earth history. The time-travelling aliens have wrought havoc on your past by removing items of historical significance from their correct time zone to one of the eight neighbouring time-zones in the local time grid, by means of their heavily-armed timeships.

6. THIS IS WHAT YOU DO . . .

To save the universe from chaotic collapse you must proceed as follows . . .

Engage and destroy the enemy ship in your time zone by space to space combat. The dead alien's cargo will materialise in the form of an alphabetical letter. Collect this letter by coming to a complete halt in its centre. It will be stowed in your hold and attacks will continue until you have destroyed the enemy fleet and collected all the letters.

The on-ship computer will now ask you to unscramble the letters to identify the original cargo dislodged in time by the enemy. Having done this, you must locate the entrance to a time warp and fly into it. The time-grid will be displayed. Now decide which of the eight neighbouring time zones is the year in which your cargo belongs.

The jump is made and you appear in a new time-zone. Your first task is to land on earth (fly straight into it) and see if your cargo will solve the historical problem. If you have the correct cargo, then it will be ejected, your oxygen and fuel will be replenished and you may do battle with a new breed of enemy for the next item.

If you have jumped to the wrong time zone, then you will still have to destroy enough ships, mines and enemy missiles to liberate sufficient energy to create a new time warp, but no enemy cargo will appear. Only then will you be able to escape, still carrying the same cargo.

Once you have corrected history in all nine zones in the time-grid, the time warp formed after the next battle will take you to one of the eight neighbouring time-grids in the current time-block. You must take the first letter of each of the nine items you have moved and unscramble THESE to form a password, which, when entered into the flight computer will convince it that you are capable of inter-grid time travel.

Having completed all nine time-grids in the current block, you must unscramble the initial letters of the nine grid passwords to form the password for inter-block time travel down the next time warp. At this stage just one third of history has been corrected.

When all three time blocks (and hence all 27 time-grids and all 243 time zones) have been corrected, you will have three inter-block passwords. Take the first and last letters of each, unscramble them, and you will have the six letter master password which will permit exit from the space-time continuum. You will then yourself become event zero, and have achieved the title of

CREATOR

7. RANKINGS

Your achievements for mankind are rewarded with ascending rank as follows:

ACHIEVEMENTS:

None
One complete time zone
Line of 3 time zones
One complete time-grid
Line of 3 time grids
One complete time block
Two complete blocks
Three blocks and
Event Zero

RANK:

Novice
Chronotourist
Trizoner
Grid Master
Triple Grid Master
Space Admiral
Supreme Commander

CREATOR

8. INSTRUMENTS

Looking from left to right at your instrument panel, you will see: the speedometer, measuring the magnitude of your velocity. Next, the hull thermometer. This registers higher at high speeds, and the hull is also heated by excessive laser fire.

Next there is a display of the letters in your cargo hold, followed by the essential biplanar scanners, which provide all-round detection.

The first (X-Z) scanner gives a view around you in the horizontal plane in which you are flying. You are in the centre and flying 'up' the screen, so an enemy a long way to your left and behind would be in the bottom-left corner of the display.

The second (Y-Z) scanner lets you know how far above or below you the enemy is, by providing a view around you in the vertical plane, in which you are flying at centre towards the right. Thus an enemy ahead and above would be towards the top-right corner of the scanner.

Enemies are indicated by plus (+) signs, their missiles and mines by dots (.), while everything else is indicated with minus (-) signs. With practice you will become skilful enough to locate anything anywhere in 3-D space just by glancing at the scanners.

Adjacent to the scanners you will see a set of pitch/yaw/roll indicators, and above them a calendar giving the year of the current time-zone. The final two gauges give your fuel (hydrox) and oxygen levels, and below them you will find a display of the remaining hulls on your ship.

Your ship is a multi-hulled vessel, and impacts with mines, rocks and missiles will increase the outer hull temperature. The more potent weapons will destroy a hull completely.

9. PLAYING TIPS

As with most arcade games, your ability to control the S.S. Stardate, your combat skills, and your sense of position will improve with practice.

Rocks, binary rocks and other space debris will not be destroyed by laser fire, so you must avoid them.

As your historical knowledge grows, you will soon be able to take the fastest route around each time-grid, in nine steps, thereby gaining points for conserved fuel and oxygen. You will also gain points for destroying enemy ships, mines and missiles.

10. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Starion is the result of over nine months of intensive part-time programming by David Webb, a nineteen year-old undergraduate in Mathematics at Exeter College, Oxford. He is also the author of two books on the ZX Spectrum; 'Supercharge Your Spectrum', a collection of machine language routines for basic programmers, and 'Advanced Spectrum Machine Language', for experienced machine language programmers. Both are published by Melbourne House.