

Mission Design Editor

This editor will give designers a tool from which they will be able to plan, create, map, edit, and run the game on the target engine. It will also serve as a standard to be used by designers over the span of many more games, with full customization options for the future. The intention is for designers to spend less time coding mission data and more time doing quality

Summary:

Here's the editor the way I see it:

The designer can put any object available in the game on the map window, while having the ability to change the object's attributes (AI skill level, heading, direction, timing information., etc.) at any time. Also included in this is the ability to insert wherever necessary mission-specific sounds and communications messages.

It will also allow the designers to watch the battle play itself out in two dimensions, from a number of different angles, before the space-flight engine is even complete. This may include a simple Asteroids-like interface where the player can assume the identity of each ship and make sure the proper flags and triggers are set even if one of the objects in the playfield is going awry (i.e. the player is trying to fly south instead of north).

Windows:

Several windows will be needed, with the option to resize, close, reopen, minimize, and maximize each of them. Here's a list of the ones I've come up with:

- **Map Window**

This is where you see the mission map's x,y,z layout. X and Y are laid out horizontally and vertically, while Z will be a simple re-sizing of the object's icon. There should be hotkeys to zoom in and out on the field, as well as some buttons on somewhere on the map itself. Perhaps the map window is both a map and an information screen, with a small area to the right side of the map showing the size of the map, the objects on the map, zoom buttons, and anything else as needed. Left-clicking on an object updates its information in the Object Information Window. Double-clicking brings up a properties dialogue, allowing the user to change its values. Right clicking opens a menu (allowing typical Win '95 stuff like New >, Delete, Trigger, Special, or Properties).

- **Object Window**

The Object Window should display a list of the current objects that are available to the mission, listed in a user-definable one-, two-, or three-column display. They should be in an intuitive order with good default values, and when they display more than one column, the additional columns should scroll independently of each other to cut back on time spent scrolling through the list. With the right mouse button, the player should be able to drag an object to a different position on the list, and with the left button, he should be able to drag an object onto the Map Window and drop it where he wants. If he holds the Ctrl- key while dragging the object, the object will snap to an interval of 1,000 meters or so, to allow perfect and uniform placement.

- **Variable Window**

Variables are something we need to keep track of constantly, so they get their own window. It displays a list of pertinent variables (how many ships are dead, whether the princess was rescued), colored to identify their type (red for boolean, blue for integer), and their status constantly while the mission is playing out. Right-clicking here will allow new variables to be placed, default values to be assigned to variables, and variable properties and types to be changed.

- **Object Information**

The Object Information Window will display pertinent information for an object (location, loadout, AI personality, special flags, etc.) and will update itself dynamically when the user left-clicks on a ship in the Map Window.

- **Others**

Other possible windows include:

- **AI Status**
- **Hot Spots & Triggers**
- **Mission Recorder/Playback device**

Pull-down Menus:

Done in true Windoze '95 tradition:

- **File**

Typical File menu: New, New Series, Open, Open Series, Save, Save As, Properties, Import Map, Source Control, as well as the last three or four files the user has opened.

- **Edit**

Typical Edit menu: Undo, Redo, Cut, Copy, Paste, Select All Objects, etc.

- **Variable**