

**RoboQuest**

<b>COLLABORATORS</b>
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# Chapter 1

## RoboQuest

### 1.1 RoboQuest © by JIPsoft 1997-1998

RoboQuest was written by me, JIPsoft, in September 1997 - January 1998 in AMOS.

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This is the documentation file for my glorious programmable maze game, RoboQuest. Here's the topics...

Overall	- what's the game like?
The Main Menu	- what you'll see first
Playing the game	- what you'll spend most of your time doing
Blocks and items	- the stuff the world is made of
Using the robots	- you want to use them, don't you?
The program editor	- the really exciting programming bit
Music support	- play that funky music
Requirements	- all righty, here's what I require...
SEND ME MONEY!	- yes, you heard me.

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### 1.2 The cat's hair got over all my clothes

RoboQuest is a game where the basic aim is to use 4 separate robots to collect all the diamonds from a map. A map is made of 40\*40 squares, which can consist of both a base block and an item on top of them.

The robots are accessed with a programming language. This is covered more specifically in the programming language manual. It is impossible to play the game without programming the robots at some point.

Included is a program called RoboEd, which is used for creating and/or altering the RoboQuest maps. However, to save your creations, you must register the game. This program is explained in the RoboEd guide file.

More specific information is covered in the following nodes.

### 1.3 Typically what you see in restaurants

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When you first load the game, you'll see a nice logo picture and five buttons. These are, from left to right:

- Play the game. You must have a map file loaded to do this.
- Load a map file from disk. Use only genuine RoboQuest map files.
- Delete a file. Any file, not just RoboQuest maps.
- Statistics. All sorts of information for the trainspotters.
- Quit the game. But why would you want to do that?

Click on any of the buttons and you're away!

## 1.4 Another visitor. Play a while... play forever!

RoboQuest is played from the playing screen, unsurprisingly. This screen has lots of different areas. The biggest area in the left side of the screen is the map window, where you can see a bit of the map. Note that you can only see squares which you have explored, unknown squares appear gray.

To the right side are the robot control buttons. Pressing the "Edit" buttons takes you to the program editor, while pressing the "Run" buttons runs the robots' programs. Below are control buttons for saving or quitting the game, and loading and playing music modules.

In the bottom right corner are the map window scrolling buttons. The arrows scroll the map window around, and the central button focuses on the robot you last used to do something.

In the extreme lower edge is the text output screen, independent of the playing screen. This is where all the text output of your programs appears. The output screen uses high resolution (80 columns), and 16 colours.

The aim of the game is to collect all the diamonds on the map and place them onto diamond deposits. To do this, you must have your robots go all around the map and pick up and drop items. Note that each robot can only carry 1 item at a time, and has a fuel supply, which depletes every time the robot moves.

When you have collected all the diamonds on the map, you will see a completion message. If the map file is password protected, you will also be given the correct password.

The robots are controlled with commands, which are explained in the manual of the programming language. It is impossible to control them directly, unless you write the routines yourself.

The main input device is the mouse. You will, of course, need the keyboard for inputting your programs. The joystick is only an optional input device for use when running the programs.

## 1.5 Block by block, item by item...

RoboQuest squares consist of a block part (underneath) and an item part (over). There are 16 blocks and 8 items. These are, as follows:

Blocks:

Empty. The robots can't enter this space at all.

Floor. The basic block, travelling just fine.

Weak floor. When the robots pass this, it weakens, until it becomes empty space, which is inaccessible.

Arrows. Allow travel only in the direction they're pointing in.

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Water. No robot can enter this square without carrying a boat, or having another boat-carrying robot in the square already.

Desert. No robot can enter this square without carrying air conditioning, or having another air conditioning -carrying robot in the square already.

Locks. Only openable with the corresponding keys, which disappear after opening the locks.

Message blocks. These contain special messages, which the robots automatically read and store in a special system variable.

Teleports. Purple squares. These act as doors to other parts of the map. If the robot is not carrying a teleport ring, the teleport functions automatically. Otherwise, the robot can use it at will.

Pyramids. Like empty space, totally inaccessible.

Diamond deposits. Blue squares with yellow markings. Dropping diamonds onto these progresses the game.

Items:

Nothing. Self-explanatory, really.

Diamond. The basic item. Grab this and get to a diamond deposit to drop it off. The diamond disappears in the process.

Fuel. Brown circles with "F" written on them. Each of these balls contains 51 units of fuel, which can boost the robots' fuel supplies.

Keys. Open locks.

Boats. Travel on water.

Air conditioning. Turquoise circles with "AC" written on them. Travel on desert.

Teleport rings. While carrying these, the robots can avoid being automatically whisked away when stepping on teleports.

## 1.6 Rossum lives on...

RoboQuest uses 4 separate robots, which can be programmed with a special programming language. The robots can move around the map and pick up or drop items.

Each robot has a control panel on the playing screen, having the "Edit" and "Run" buttons, and a fuel indicator (from 0 to 255), and a cargo indicator. The cargo can be one of eight (well, seven really) items.

Each time a robot moves, it uses 1 unit of fuel. If it runs out of fuel, it cannot move. However, it can be refuelled if another robot drops it a fuel container, which the robot then picks up and uses.

Each robot has a unique program consisting of 100 lines, which can be up to 64 characters long. However, the variables are shared between all robots. The program is what actually controls the robots.

When running a program, the mouse is inoperable. This will be shown with the mouse pointer becoming a clock. However, programs can read the keyboard and the joystick (if you have one). When the program has finished, the mouse pointer becomes an arrow and the mouse is operable once again.

## 1.7 René! What are you doing?

The program editor is on a separate screen from the playing screen. It is in high resolution (80 columns) and has some buttons, an information line, and of course the program area itself.

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You can use the mouse or the keyboard to use the editor. Clicking on buttons activates their functions, and clicking on the program area moves the cursor. You can also use the function keys F1...F9 to use the buttons. Here is an overview of the buttons and keys.

The buttons:

- Save. Save your program to disk.
- Load. Load a program file from disk. Only the first 100 lines get used, and only the first 64 characters from each line.
- Delete. Delete a file from disk.
- Clear. Clear the current program from the editor.
- Test. Check the program for syntax errors, without actually running it.
- Run. Actually run the program.
- Store. Store the program in a special memory clipboard.
- Recall. Recall the program from the special memory clipboard.
- Exit. Go back to the playing screen.

Keys to use:

- Cursor keys: move the cursor around.
  - with shift: move the cursor up or down one page.
  - with ctrl: move to the first/last bit with text in it.
  - with alt: move to the edges of the program.
- Tab: move to the next tab position.
  - with shift: move to the previous tab position.
- Backspace: delete the character to the left of the cursor.
  - with shift: insert a space into the row.
  - with ctrl: erase the row and move all subsequent rows one row up.
- Delete: delete the character underneath the cursor.
  - with ctrl: erase the row.
- Return: move to the beginning of the next line.
  - with ctrl: insert a new row into the program.

All "printable" keys (with an ASCII code of 32 or more) add text into the program. You will see a "\*" in the information line next to the program name to tell you the program has been modified.

## 1.8 That's the way to do it...

RoboQuest can load and play modules from disk. The game supports three types of modules: ProTracker, MED and AMOS. The modules are recognised automatically upon loading from disk. You can use the "start/stop music" button on the playing screen to start or stop the music module.

If your module file is faulty, it will not be played. Note that with AMOS banks, the file must only contain one bank. If the file erases the data RoboQuest needs to have in memory, the game will automatically end.

## 1.9 Just a few little things...

Simple, really. All that is required is:

- An Amiga computer (any model >=500).

- At least 1.2 megabytes of free memory.
- A mouse (and a keyboard, but most Amigas already have this).
- The presence of the data files RoboData1.abk and RoboData2.abk.
- A map file if you wish to actually do something in the game.
- A basic (pun intended) knowledge of programming to actually do something useful in the game.
- Electricity. Not for you, silly, for your Amiga.

## 1.10 Money makes the world go round

So far, I have had a few registrations for my earlier games, Excavation and Cubical Worlds, but for some mysterious reason none for my last game, Mr UFO. Anyway I've carried the keyfile system over from Mr UFO to this game.

The version of RoboQuest itself included in this release is the full one. However, the ShareWare version of RoboEd (the map editor) will refuse to save maps. To register the program, you need a keyfile.

Keyfiles are written personally for each person registering the game. The person's name is included in the keyfile, and can be up to 20 characters long. Keyfiles can also be password protected to prevent unauthorised people from playing the registered version of the game. To use this feature, submit a password of up to 20 characters when registering.

You can buy a keyfile for Mr UFO, RoboEd, or both. Here are the possible registration methods:

Method of registration	SEK	FIM	DEM	USD	GBP
1 keyfile only, by e-mail	10	7	2.30	1.30	0.80
Both keyfiles only, by e-mail	15	10	3.30	1.80	1.10
1 keyfile only, on disk 1)	17	12	4.00	2.20	1.35
Both keyfiles only, on disk 1)	22	15	5.00	2.70	1.65
1 keyfile only, on disk 2)	25	17	5.60	3.10	1.90
Both keyfiles only, on disk 2)	29	20	6.60	3.60	2.25
All of my games, on disk 1)	32	22	7.30	4.00	2.45
All of my games, on disk 2)	47	32	10.60	5.80	3.55

- 1) You supply your own disks (1 DD disk for keyfiles, 2 DD disks for all games)
- 2) I provide disks for you

If you register by "all games", you get the following games: The Butterflies!, Self Defense, Maze Mania, Fantasy Trade, The Secret of Arcturus, Super Daleks, Lactose Intolerance, L, ZombieZ, Strateq, Excavation, Cubical Worlds, Mr UFO and RoboQuest. All of them will be registered versions, of course. That's only 2.29 SEK, 1.57 FIM, 0.52 DEM, 0.29 USD or 0.18 GBP per game! Where else can you get games this cheap? Not from many places, that's for sure.

If you want to register, please e-mail me at: palaste@cc.helsinki.fi  
Or write to me at:

Joona Palaste  
Toppelundintie 3B 19  
02170 Espoo  
Finland

I am looking forward to your registrations!



## 1.11 JIPsoft? Who is he?

JIPsoft equals yours truly, Joona Palaste.  
Here are his current statistics:

Age: 21 years  
Nationality: Finnish  
School: Student at the Helsinki University, Department of Computer Science  
Computer: A1200 with 6 MB memory & 1033 MB HD  
New girlfriend-to-be: Laura Kalli (although don't tell her that)

I have also released other games, such as:

- Self Defense, a text adventure
- Lactose Intolerance, an arcade game
- Super Daleks, another arcade game
- The Secret of Arcturus, a semi-RPG
- Strateg, a Chess derivative
- Excavation, an underground arcade/strategy game
- Cubical Worlds, an exciting arcade/puzzle game in glorious 3D!
- Mr UFO, a "gravity flight" -type game with 8 levels

I am also a part-time member of the RRR team. See any RRR production for details.

## 1.12 Professional widow

Some people wonder why I still use AMOS. I often wonder the same too. To put it shortly, AMOS is a simple, but quite powerful language. Its biggest downside is its inability to function on a standard Intuition screen, not having to open a non-system screen all the time. But I'm happy that I'm not the only person in the world to program games in AMOS. Just read the Readers' Games part of Amiga Format, and you'll see lots of other AMOS games. Well, a few, at least. Too bad EuroPress has totally forgotten about AMOS's existence. A hint for EuroPress: A real PC version of AMOS, unlike that stupid Klik'n'Play, would certainly get you more buyers. Ask François Lionet, he's sure to have some vague recollection of AMOS hidden in a corner of his mind, despite years of drinking French cognac trying to forget it. =)

## 1.13 Back for the future, I hear.

The big news of 1997 was, of course, that the Amiga is back. Woohoo. Gateway2000 are trying to market the Amiga. Like Viscom tried before them. And Escom before them. Will they succeed? Maybe in the UK, or Germany, but I still doubt more than 5 Amigas will be sold in Finland in the next decade, and of these, more than half will come from the UK or Germany. The diagnosis: people in Finland don't know the Amiga exist. The suggested cure: \* ADVERTISE THE BLOODY THING ON TV AND IN NEWSPAPERS! \* Really. How hard is it exactly to get the product name mentioned somewhere? Somewhere where a person who has less than 10 years of Amiga experience could see it? Too hard, it seems. A pity.

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