



Drift Help Index

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Drift Overview

The year is 5300 and you are in command of the brand new experimental DriftRunner V3X22 (yep... a major improvement over the old V2X22 series). Humanity has colonized huge parts of the galaxy but the mysterious Vhol Drift has never been successfully explored. Strange aliens with strange technology live inside the dangerous Drift and it is said that he who successfully explores the Drift will be both famous and rich.

So, your mission is clear. Enter the Vhol Drift and try to penetrate as deep as you can. But beware... the asteroid field gets more dense the further you go and encounters with the evil Polygunzz are also more likely. You have to shoot and destroy all the asteroids (and other obstacles) to clear a path through the Vhol Drift to make it possible for Terran exploration crafts to enter the Drift and exploit its resources and discover its mysteries. The task will not be easy but if anyone can do it, it surely is you...

Good luck!



Playing Drift

Moving:

Your DriftRunner V3X22 is floating in the Vhol Drift and can be moved by applying thrust to the engines. Don't forget that you are flying in space and there are NO breaks, so to stop (or reduce speed) you will have to apply thrust in the opposite direction of where you are moving.

The following keys can be used to maneuver your ship:

Left cursor key	Rotates your ship counter-clockwise.
Right cursor key	Rotates your ship clockwise.
Up cursor key	Applies thrust to your engine.

Shooting:

Since there is no way that you can clear a path through the Drift by peaceful means, your ship is equipped with a state of the art P-Type missile launcher. To fire your weapons use key:

Space bar	Fires missile.
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Note: Between shots your missile launcher has to recharge so quickly pressing the space bar has no effect on your rate of fire. If you press and hold the space bar continuously, your weapon system will fire at its best possible rate. Also remember that firing a missile causes your ship to drift in the opposite direction due to "the forces of nature".

Dying - NOT!

You have only one (!) life in Drift so staying alive is your main concern. Don't crash into any asteroids and evade the shots (and ships) of the Polygunzz. Remember that your shots affect the momentum of your ship so for quick maneuvers: stop shooting.

PowerUps

Luckily for you, the Polygunzz have hidden weapon stores inside some of the bigger asteroids. If you destroy these asteroids there is a good chance that some weapon systems will be undamaged and will be floating in space. Your spaceship is equipped with a Universal PowerUp Magnetic Connector (UPMC standard IFFF 2101) and the Polygunzz weapon systems are 100% compatible with this system (!). So if you see a weapon system floating in space, the only thing you have to do is fly over it at a reasonably speed and the weapon system will automatically connect with your UPMC and install itself on your ship.



This powerup will give your DriftRunner an extra missile launcher tube (due to space limitations 2 tubes is the absolute maximum). You will be able to fire two missiles instead of one. Don't forget that if you fire two shots, your ship will be pushed backwards with a much bigger force. Some nifty flying may be necessary.



This powerup increases the range of your shots by adding extra booster units to your missiles. There is no maximum to the number of PowerUps of this kind that you can collect but don't forget that you can shoot yourself in the back if your shots fly too far!



This powerup installs a rear missile tube. Yes... guess what... you will be able to shoot those tricky asteroids behind you.



Flying over this powerup installs a Polygunzz shield generator that protects you against collisions with asteroids (not against missiles). Unfortunately your ships fusion batteries are not powerful enough to maintain full shieldpower so after a while this powerup module will become weaker. Picking up another powerup of this type will replenish the batteries. Hitting asteroids will decrease the power of your shield dramatically so don't hit too many asteroids if you want your shield to last. Your shield will change color when the batteries are running out.



This installs a rapid reloading unit (an invention by the MooDonian lifeforms) giving you faster fire and hence more destructive power. You can pick up two of these but remember: the faster you shoot the faster you drift!

Special levels

In this version of Drift there are only a few special levels. Look out for the black hole zone where asteroids warp due to the enormous gravitational field of the black hole.

Other useful keys

Pause game:	F10
Quit:	F3
Play:	F2
Pause and minimize:	ESC



Scoring in Drift

Destroying things gives you points! Points only serve one purpose, to get your name in the hall of fame so that you can show your friends that you are the greatest and that you will kick butt in the multiplayer version of drift.

Who's worth what...



Small asteroid
15 points



Medium asteroid
10 points



Big asteroid
5 points



Satellite
20 points

The Polygunzz have placed a lot of defense satellites in the Vhol drift. The sats are not very intelligent but can be dangerous when met in numbers.



Damaged Satellite
0 points (Already destroyed)

Sometimes defense satellites are damaged, not destroyed. Beware! Because their internal systems go haywire resulting in a feast of (self)destruction.



Fighter Mk1
30 points

This is the standard Polygunzz fighter craft. It has a single missile tube, reasonable engines and a mediocre turning rate.



Fighter Mk2
40 points

This is an upgraded version of the Mark 1 fighter. It is faster, has a good turning rate and is equipped with dual missile launchers.



Mystery ship
50 points

These ships have occasionally been sighted in the more dense parts of the drift. Nobody knows anything about their offensive or defensive capabilities.



History of Drift

There are some good Asteroids games available but I really wanted to make a game (for Windows) that had a lot of variation, with PowerUps, special levels, interesting enemies and good playability. Here are some Asteroids games I like:

Hyperoid: A superb Freeware Asteroid clone. I spend zillions of hours playing this gem. I think the game routines from Hyperoid are still better than those in Drift (but I am working on it).

Asteroids: Yep... no clone but the original game. Excellent fun and original sound affects from the Windows Arcade Pack (Microsoft).

XPilot: An incredible playable multiplayer game for XWindows. This is what I want the multiplayer version of Drift to be.

This is Version 1.02 of Drift.

- * This is the *LAST* freeware version before the shareware version. I have rewritten small parts of the code but I am waiting for a bigger rewrite for the freeware version. I optimized some small sections of the program and fixed a few minor bugs.

- * The hiscore screen now redraws much better (so no more delays and/or slowdowns during this screen). The delay was due to the fact that the beta test of Drift had animation in the hiscore screen.

- * I added the fast fire powerup and increased your basic firing rate to make the game (yet again) a little easier.

- * Fixed an annoying bug that caused a 'Division by zero' error when running Windows under resolutions bigger than 800x600.

- * Fixed the 'shield-keeps-on-flying-on-its-own-feature'.

- * I added a pause feature (useful when you are breaking your record and an eager customer walks into your office).

- * Added a 'Boss-key'. Now, when your boss storms into your office press escape to pause and minimize the game! Very handy...

- * Minimising the game now automatically pauses the action. This is not so fancy as earlier versions where you could still play Drift when iconized but it doesn't slowdown other applications.

Version 1.01

- * I made the game a little bit easier (nobody got through level 4).

- * I increased the collision accuracy.

- * Removed a very occasional bug that occurred when the game was already over and an angry sat destroyed itself.

- * I added the accelerator keys to the Drift menu (for some mysterious reason they had disappeared in the first Freeware release).



What's next?

The first release of Drift will be the Freeware version (this version) and will be followed by the Shareware version and later the multiplayer network version (if I can find the time to program all this). The Shareware version of Drift will probably include sound effects, two player mode (on the same screen), more types of enemies, more powerups and some extra special levels. I am not sure if I will be able to make the multiplayer network version because, at the time of this writing, I don't know anything about network programming (but I really want a multiplayer drift so I will have to learn the stuff). I expect the Shareware version of Drift to be ready by the end of 94 but don't expect miracles... I do not have a lot of time at the moment.

Anyway... if you have any comments, suggestions, bug reports or loveletters. Send them to:

Dirk Vandenheuvel
Postbus 66
3000 Leuven 1
Belgium

Or Fidonet

Netmail to 2:292/600.9

or (if you don't live on the other side of the galaxy)
leave a message on Tornado BBS 32 (0)16/640582



Detail settings

In later stages of the game, the number of objects exploding, rotating and shooting can slow down some machines. For "not-so-fast-machines" Drift offers three different detail setting. These setting simplify certain aspect of the game to make it more playable.

The three different settings are:

- High detail: For fast computers (486/33 recommended). High detail has big explosions, more thrustpixels and damaged satellites "loose" a lot of debris.
- Medium detail: For slower computers. Medium detail has smaller explosions, not so many thrustpixels and damaged satellites "loose" a lot less debris.
- Low Detail: For computers that have trouble on other detail settings. Low detail has very small explosions (small asteroids do not have pixel explosions), very few thrustpixels and damaged satellites "loose" no debris.

If you have a Windows accelerator graphics card you should be able to play Drift on a high detail setting even on slow computers because a lot of the speed slowdown is due to the drawing of the graphics.



Freeware

Drift is Freeware. This means you can copy it as much as you like as long as you don't change anything to the original program. I spend a lot of time programming this game and I hope you enjoy it. If you really like it you can always send me a postcard.

The following files should be included in Drift102.zip (or other compression format).

Drift.exe	Main executable
Drift.hlp	Drift help file
Readme.txt	Text file describing Drift

Thrustpixels

The "pixeltrail" that is generated when you apply thrust to your engines.

The Vhol Drift

A huge and dangerous asteroid field close to the Formalhaut system. The alien species that inhabits the Drift is aggressive and has special technology that protects them from asteroid collisions. The Vhol Drift is one of the last unexplored parts of the galaxy.

The strange Polygunzz

The evil Polygunzz inhabit the Vhol drift. Their strange technology enables them to fly through the asteroid field without too much danger. They have never been seen but their spaceships are like no other... built in some strange tubelike material.

