

odifying Ambrosia Games - Part One

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Ambrosia Software www.ambrosiasw.com has to be one of the best makers of shareware games ever, right up there with id, which nowadays relies on conventional retail for most of its sales. Ambrosia, on the other hand, remains completely shareware based, despite offers of commercial publication. It charges very reasonable prices for its games (\$15, that's £10 - on average), but they are always excellent.

One of the nicest things about them is that they are completely modifiable, using external resource files for everything from pictures to sounds, levels (in some) to sprites. Over the next two months I'll take a look at how to create new levels and graphics (with nothing more than ResEdit - available to download for free from www.apple.com and on all good magazine Cover CDs) for many of Ambrosia's games.

Aperion

Apeiron is an intensely playable modern reworking of that old classic Centipede. Levels aren't modifiable, but sounds, music and graphics are - just open Apeiron Music, Apeiron Sounds, Apeiron Sprites, or Apeiron Titles and find the relevant resource.

Avara

Avara was released well before it's time, but is popular nowadays. It is a network game intended to be played over the internet. Most graphics are 3D DXF files, and thus hard to create, but levels are fairly easy to make. Bizarrely enough, they are stored in PICT resources. There is a good guide to level creation in Extras: Mission Editing/Creating so a guide is not needed in this series. Plug ins are fully supported.

Barrack

Barrack is the reworking of another old classic, and what its name means is the subject of a bizarre amount of debate. Levels aren't modifiable, but sounds, music and graphics are - just open Barrack Music, Barrack Sounds, Barrack Sprites, or Barrack Titles and find the relevant resource.

Bubble Trouble

Bubble Trouble is a bit like that game where you played a penguin (I can't quite remember the name), only you now control Blinky the fish as he squashes sharks, eels and the like with bubbles. Not only are sounds and graphics modifiable - follow the usual procedure, except that music is modified by replacing MOD files in BT music- but levels are too.

Unfortunately, no templates for MAZE and LEVL resources are included, so it is well nigh on impossible to edit them with just ResEdit. All is not lost however - a nifty little utility called BT Edit is available from www.ambrosiasw.com and will let you easily edit the existing levels or make your own.

Chiral

In Chiral you try and create complete molecules from various atoms - it may not sound much fun, but it is. Levels aren't modifiable, but sounds, music and graphics are - just open Chiral Music, Chiral Sounds, Chiral Sprites, or Chiral Titles and find the relevant resource.

Escape Velocity

Aha, now we're getting somewhere. Escape Velocity is a stunning game - one of the best of all time. It is completely modifiable, and it is surprisingly easy to modify such a complex game. The EV Resource Bible available from www.escape-velocity.com will let you create missions, and give you instructions on how to. Plug ins are fully supported and widely available. It is worth noting that due to resource conflicts, a lot of plug-ins are not compatible with each other.

Escape Velocity: Override

Escape Velocity: Override is the brilliant sequel to Escape Velocity, featuring a huge new universe. Override's resource files use slightly different templates, which are given with and described in the EVO Resource Bible available from www.escape-velocity.com/override

Next month

I'll take a look at 5 more great games: Harry the Handsome Executive, Maelstrom (one of Ambrosia's first games), the great vertical scroller Mars Rising, the addictive Swoop and Ambrosia's latest title Slithereens. If you can't wait then point your browser at thomasash.hypermart.net/bnet/items/00044.html for the complete version of this guide.

1984 wishes to add that while you can enjoy editing your own copy of Ambrosia software YOU MUST NOT edit Shareware you have not purchased. Nor can you make money from editing Ambrosia software without their permission and copyrights - remember for your fun only.

 **Comments?:**

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