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How to play Beyond The Black Hole

on your Commodore® 64/128

Getting Started

System Requirements

Beyond The Black Hole requires a Commodore 64 or 128 with at least one disk drive. A mouse or joystick is optional. (If you're using a mouse or joystick, it must be connected to Port 2.)

Starting the Game

Insert Disk 1 into your disk drive and type LOAD "BH", 8, 1 and press RETURN (or type LOAD "BH", 8 and RETURN followed by RUN and RETURN). Following the opening screens, you'll be prompted to insert Disk 2. After the second disk is inserted, press any key to begin the game.

Playing The Game

Read the information below carefully! It contains instructions on piloting your orb and game play. Mouse/Joystick/Keyboard sequences are shown in double lines.

The 3-D Effect

The ability to see 3-D varies among individuals. To enhance the effect, darken the room, put on the goggles, relax and look "past" the screen. You will soon see objects that move several inches in front of and behind your display monitor.

The Game

You are a scientific officer, just graduated from Flonogmanum Academy with a degree in space cartography and measurement. Your first assignment is at Space Cartography Outpost P-0094 KL, an asteroid-based scientific colony. You've been sent here to begin the investigation of some very strange phenomena...

On your first day, you receive your orders and two innocent appearing memos.

Some have blamed roving fuel pirates (though these marauders generally just attack individual ships, not entire fuel depots). Others contend that, for whatever reason, the forces beyond the black hole kidnapped Vern and his service station/restaurant.

No one has yet returned from the Black Hole although we did receive final radio transmissions from earlier unsuccessful missions. These transmissions indicated that the flight crews had encountered wave after wave of unusual objects in their path. Each wave (or level) of objects was some sort of a challenge or puzzle that must be solved before the ship could pass. The rules for solving each level are different and must be discovered by your flight crew. Some are variations of Earth-based puzzles of the 20th century, some require great physical skill and some require literal (or humorous) interpretations of the objects you encounter. Many levels require that all objects be eliminated before you may pass, while others require a more subtle approach. For each level you defeat you will receive a bonus paid in both fuel and credits.

Additional Glasses

Additional sets of 3-D glasses (one pair of the special neutral-density filter GrenoVision™ Goggles and one pair of red/blue 3-D Reading glasses) may be ordered directly from The Software Toolworks. The price for the set is \$5.95 (US funds) including shipping and handling. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

To: Cartographer #12

Date: 25834.83.0

Use XJ-11 Orb to continue surveillance and mapping of Vicinity NAW-991.

We have been assured by Galactic Motors that earlier reports of wave-detection problems and excessive fuel consumption with the XJ series were exaggerated and that our new orbs are fully operational. So, we are releasing them for general scientific duties today. Good luck.

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: Base Commander, Space Cartography Outpost P-0094 KL

To: All Cartographers

Re: New XJ-11 cartography orbs: Preliminary Manual

Date: 25834.83.2

After a wait of seven deca-time units, the new science/cartography orbs have finally arrived. These new orbs have been specially designed to assist us in our mission here of mapping and investigating this quadrant of the galaxy. The many new features and capabilities of the XJ-11 orb should make our job here much easier.

WARNING: When piloting your XJ Series space orb, wear your space goggles. The rapid phase shifts possible in these orbs makes it a requirement.

Because most of our pilots grew up in the era of video games in the late 20th century, we have designed the orb control panel to resemble a video game. At the left and right edges of the screen are the Abrams "Rebound Fields" (which resemble video game paddles of yesteryear). Use your orb controls to maneuver the paddles up and down to deflect your orb back into the center of the screen. If your orb should get past the paddles and off the edge of the screen, a large expenditure of fuel will be required to return to the desired course.

The controls for various orb models may vary. Some are outfitted with Mouse or Joystick controller units, while others are controlled exclusively through the Keyboard. Determine which controller unit is present in your orb and position the paddles this way:

	UP	DOWN
MOUSE	Mouse forward	Mouse backward
JOYSTICK	Stick forward	Stick back
KEYBOARD	'A' or 'K'	'Z' or 'M'

As you orbit around the items you encounter in deep space, you may dive down to investigate phenomena more closely by issuing the following commands. You may only issue a dive command at the peak of your orbit. To dive:

MOUSE:	Mouse button
JOYSTICK:	Fire button
KEYBOARD:	Space Bar

The following keyboard commands are also available during your mission:

	Sound Off/On	Pause Mission	End Mission
KEYBOARD:	S	P	Q

A fuel pirate may appear at any time and begin chasing you. Avoid the pirate or much of your fuel will be taken. If you avoid the pirate long enough, his ship is transformed into a second orb and, while the second orb is on the screen, your points and fuel are increased.

Two messages may appear on your orb control screen at the lower left corner of the screen. FUEL LOW means that the next time you drift off-screen, all your fuel will be lost. FUEL CRITICAL means that if a fuel pirate captures you, all your fuel will be lost.

The bottom right hand corner of the display shows the amount of fuel remaining in your tank. When the fuel tank is empty, your mission will be terminated. To avoid this, when fuel runs low, you must immediately seek out a refueling depot.

To find a refueling depot, press the 'G' (for Gas) key.

This will activate the fuel-finder feature of your orb and locate the nearest vehicle service center. To fuel, maneuver your orb through the fueling pods which have been opened to receive you.

Fuel depot attendants prefer payments in hard, cold intergalactic credits (which are shown at the top of your XJ-11 view screen). But, if you are running low, they will also accept credit cards (while your credit is good!). If you have less than 1000 credits, but more than 0, you'll find that the doors to the fuel pods will be closed. To open them, you need to hit the credit card sign to tell the attendant you'll be paying with plastic. (You'll not be able to use your credit card again until you've earned enough credit to pay off your balance - shown in red on the main screen.) Each refueling stop causes the size of the paddles to shrink and costs 1000 credits, so refuel with care.

To return from the refueling depot, again press the 'G' key. (You will automatically return when your tank is full or when all fuel bays are closed.)

You may terminate your mission at any time by pressing the 'Q' (for Quit) key. You will be given the option of saving your mission configuration (i.e. Save Game) for future use. When you next return to your orb, your current game level, fuel level and score will be restored.

If the mission is terminated because you have run out of fuel, you may still save your mission configuration although your score will be reset to zero and you will begin your next mission with just a half tank of fuel.

One other thing: when refueling, the paddles are absent so you must maneuver your pod directly.

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: Chief Scientific Officer
 To: All Cartographers
 Re: Update on emissions from Vicinity NAW-991
 Date: 25834.83.2

Vicinity NAW-991 has long been known to contain a Black Hole. Several deca-time units ago, unusual emissions were detected from Vicinity NAW-991. Since then, these emissions have grown stranger and even more prevalent.

There is speculation that these emissions are related to the disappearance of Vern Grenington on 25829.83.2. In this incident, Vern and his entire vehicle service station vanished.