Cosmonaut

Introduction

Cosmonaut is a social adventure game for Nintendo DS where you take the role of a cosmonaut stranded in space after the fall of the Soviet Union. Alone in space you stumble upon a strange astronomical phenomenon that makes it possible to instantly communicate with any star that you can see through your telescope.

Unique Selling Points

- Inspired by the true story of Russian cosmonaut stranded in space after the fall of an empire.
- Explore the actual Earth sky through your telescope and learn about the stars and constellations
- Greet all the fantastical civilization that lies beyond light-years of empty space
- Experience a unique blend of game-play that with exploration, social, and strategic elements.

Gameplay Overview

In the days before the fall of the Soviet Union, a single cosmonaut is sent into space. As the empire falls, all communication is suddenly broken and the cosmonaut finds himself stranded in space with no way to get home. With nothing much else to do, he spends time at the telescope and start to pick up strange messages from a far-away star.

The Cosmonaut is designed to be very simple and should be accessible to most ages. Most of the game takes place in a form of graphical user interface using the Cosmonaut's telescope or computer and their controls are kept as simple as possible. The primary goal of the game is to get back to Earth, and to do this the Cosmonaut needs to explore space around him. Using the telescope, he will discover and befriend numerous strange alien species and perform missions for them. This will teach him more about space around him and will earn him intergalatical credits that may be used to upgrade his shuttle. Continuing to explore space with more and better tools and friends will open up more and more possibilities, and hopefully in some way, lead him back to Earth.

- Exploration – The star-map will contain thousands of stars. Each star may hold something interesting and while going through them all will be an enormous task, the player may receive hints from alien races of where interesting stars may be found.
- Missions – The Cosmonaut needs to perform certain tasks for the alien races like finding a star that holds a specific mineral or scout a specific system for a colony ship that was lost a long time ago.
- Progression – The Shuttle can be upgraded with new equipment like a universal translator the help communicate with aliens, a docking port for alien visits or just a better filter for the coffeemaker.
- Social –The Cosmonaut will become friends with many different aliens. But being a friend isn't always that easy and to Cosmonaut may need to convince them by giving them presents. Also, some of their social characteristics will be rather… weird.
- Action/Puzzle – Many tasks in The Cosmonaut will open up small sequences that require timing and skill.
- Strategic – Towards the end of the game, the Cosmonaut will be a part of an intergalactical war, and will use his unique abilities to help control fleets of ships to liberate slave systems.

The Shuttle
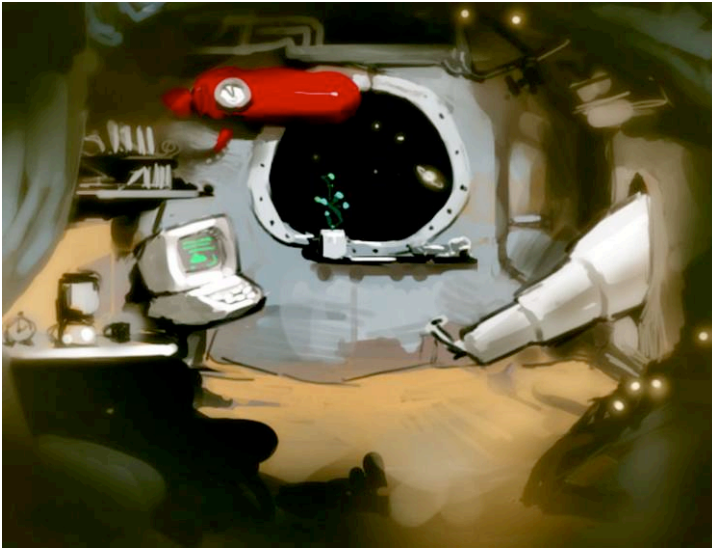
The *Shuttle View* shows the internals of the shuttle and will always be shown on either of the two screens. Here the player will see the Cosmonaut floating around, performing the different tasks that he is given. In the shuttle there will be a number of objects that the Cosmonaut can interact with like the telescope and the computer. If the player clicks on one of these objects with the stylus/mouse, it will activate it and the *Shuttle View* will be moved to the top screen. The activated object will occupy the bottom screen and while the player may access the object directly, the Cosmonaut will be seen floating to the object and interacting with it. The Cosmonaut will at times walk away from what the player is doing to do something that he feels like, even though it won't interfere with what the player is actually doing.

- The Telescope - When using the telescope, the screen will be filled up by a part of the actual view of the sky as seen from orbit above Earth. Star-names and constellations will also be shown and the player can simply scroll and zoom the map using the mouse/stylus to view the entire sky's both hemispheres.

- The Computer – The computer is used to communicate with aliens and to store information about stars. It also works as the Cosmonauts inventory and stores data-chunks.
- The TV – The TV is the only link the Cosmonaut has back to Earth. Running on the TV will be sporadic news-broadcasts on the fall of Soviet Union. After the shuttle's communication device has been upgraded, the TV will also be used when communicating with aliens.
- The Window – Outside the shuttle is a spectacular view of the Moon and Earth. Special events may take place when gazing out.
- The Coffeemaker – Everyone needs coffee.
- The Flower –The Cosmonaut brought one other living thing with him from Earth; A small flower. If the Cosmonaut takes good care of it through watering it and picking off dead leafs, it will flourish.
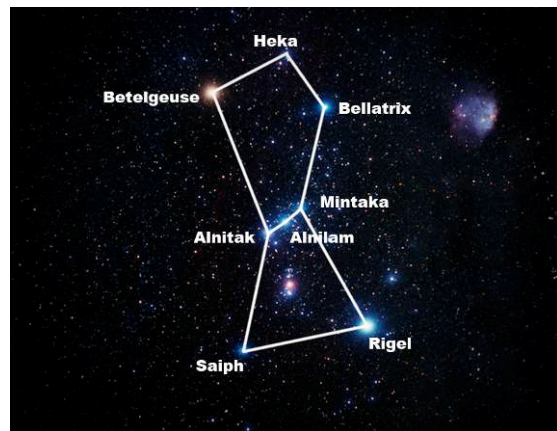
Gameplay details

The Cosmonauts best friend is his telescope. Selecting an object on the star-map with the stylus/mouse will make the telescope zoom in on the star and show it in its full beauty. The computer will automatically analyze the star for any form of signal and the Cosmonaut can try to establish communication if a signal is found.

The astronomical phenomenon that allows him to communicate instantly with anything he can see through his telescope seems to be unique in the universe. Also, an upgrade to his shuttle will take advantage of this phenomenon to get detailed scans that would otherwise only be possible through a physical visit. This makes the Cosmonaut hold a very valuable tool that many alien races will be interested in.

Many tasks that the Cosmonaut needs to do will require some sort of timing and skill. Ever time the Cosmonaut meets a new alien race; the Cosmonaut will need to do a language translation to be able to understand them. This will open up a small sequence where phonemes need to be matched with colors. Similar tasks will be needed to do deep analysis of star-systems, or when trying to connect to a lost probe found in space.

Completing a task often requires the Cosmonaut to deliver information or messages that were collected. The Cosmonaut can store this as data-chunks in his computer which basically works as the Cosmonauts inventory. Data-chunks can be sent to alien races, and alien races will usually provide data-chunks as rewards for completed tasks.

Data-chunks can be of different types:
- Star scans – Scans of a star-system that has been created by the Cosmonaut using the telescope.
- Intergalactical credits – This is a special kind of data-chunk that works as a currency throughout the galaxy. Intergalatical credits can be used with special merchant alien-races.
- Upgrade plans – These contains information on how to upgrade the Cosmonaut's shuttle.
- Presents – Presents can be things like poems or historical documents. If the Cosmonaut figures out that an alien race may be interested a specific present, it may help to befriend them.
- Special programs – These are special programs that the Cosmonaut may collect and may for example control a probe that the Cosmonaut has found.

References

Uplink

In Uplink, a map of Earth served as a playing field and you had instant access to all locations of the game. Each location could hold something totally new which gave it a great sense of exploration. Also, the way Uplink used missions and progression has been an inspiration for Cosmonaut.

Dune

The original Dune was a strange adventure/strategy/resource-management hybrid that showed how evolving game-play could keep a game fresh from start to finish. Then final act of Dune allow you to take simple control over large military forces and direct them from base to base which has inspired the final act of Cosmonaut as well.

Star-control

In Star-control you explored space, and stumbled upon weird alien civilizations that could be friends or foes. Many of the alien races were very weird and you had to convince them to help you, much like you will do in Cosmonaut.

Little computer-people

Little computer-people was a weird simulation where you could affect the surroundings of a person in a house. The Cosmonaut is in a similar situation and will have his own life, even though he usually copies the player's actions.