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From: **tom@soda.berkeley.edu (Tom Holub)**

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NOTE: If you are using rn or trn, you can use ^G to browse through the answers.

Subject: 1. What is Netrek?

Netrek is a 16-player graphical real-time battle simulation with a Star Trek theme. The game is divided into two teams of 8 (or less), who dogfight each other and attempt to conquer each other's planets. There are several different types of ships, from fast, fragile scouts up to big, slow battleships; this allows a great deal of variance in play styles.

Netrek is set up as a client/server combination; if you want to play, you'll need the client binary for your machine (most are X-based).

Subject: 2. It sounds interesting; how do I get started?

First, you need to get a client binary for your machine; read the Netrek FTP List (which is usually posted along with this FAQ list) to find an FTP site. The client should run on anything that runs X Windows, although the slower your machine is, the harder it's

going to be to play. Slow networks are even harder to play with.

If you don't know how to use FTP, ask your local guru about it.

If you don't have access to FTP, you can use the mail server at decwrl.dec.com. Mail ftpmail@decwrl.dec.com with 'help' in the body (nothing else) and you'll get an automatic reply with instructions.

Once you have the binary, rename it to something logical like 'netrek' and run it with 'netrek -h <hostname> -p <port>'. Read the Netrek Server List to find a server near you; the nearer, the better.

If you get a 'netrek: Permission denied' message, try 'chmod 755 netrek'. After the game is over, try 'man chmod.'

Subject: 3. What's the difference between Xtrek and Netrek?

Xtrek is a precursor to Netrek. It has many of the same elements, but it doesn't work as well because it isn't set up as a client-server combination.

Unfortunately, Netrek is often called Xtrek. This causes much confusion. This newsgroup really is dedicated to Netrek, but feel free to talk about Xtrek if you want; many people here play both.

Subject: 4. I've seen a game called Nettek for the Macintosh; is that the same thing as Netrek?

No. Nettek is in the same family as Netrek (it's unclear which was created first), but it's not the same game. It runs over Appletalk and doesn't have a whole lot of complexity. If you're interested in it, the original version can be found in most net archive sites that support Mac games. The most recent version is a commercial program called "Nettek 3.0 - The Real Version," and is published by Premiere Technology, Inc.

Subject: 5. Can I play Netrek on my Mac/IBM PC/Amiga?

There is a playable client for the Amiga that runs over a Dnet connection to a Unix host. Read the Netrek FTP List to find out where you can get it.

There is a newly released client for a Macintosh connected to a Unix host; it's slow but playable. There is also a client for Macs connected to the net via MacTCP (including SLIP/PPP) but it's not yet playable.

If you are running Linux or 386BSD on your IBM PC, there are clients that will work, although at 14.4K baud they are kinda sluggish. Look on ftp.csua.berkeley.edu for information on how to run a client under Linux.

Subject: 6. I would like to start a new server; what kind of hardware will I need?

The server should run on anything that has Sys V shared memory and a good amount of CPU power. Good net connections are essential if you want lots of players.

Read the Netrek FTP list to find out where you can get the server source.

Please get the permission of your sysadmins before setting up a server. Netrek doesn't need any additional bad publicity.

Subject: 7. I'm trying to start a new server, and I'm having problems. Where can I get help?

Read the Netrek FTP list to find out where the server-secrets files are stored (currently at gs69.sp.cs.cmu.edu).

There is also a server maintainer's mailing list, netrek@iastate.edu. If you want to be put on the list, mail a short message to netrek-request@iastate.edu and include the amount of C experience you have, how much you know about netrek code, and anything else that might be interesting.

Subject: 8. How do I get people to play my server?

Generally, people call up the Metaserver (see below) and try to get into a game that already has people in it. If your school has a bunch of people who play netrek, encourage them to use your server and people from other places will begin to. If you don't have a local netrek population, log on to the machine yourself and fight Hosers.

The other option is to modify the server enough that people are interested in it for the novelty. Several of the more popular servers have been created this way (Sturgeon and Paradise come to mind). Keep in mind, if you do this, that you will attract weenies more than serious players.

Subject: 9. I compiled the client source, but every time I try to connect to a server it kicks me out or tells me to get a 'blessed' binary. What gives?

It's possible to modify the client source to do lots of tedious tasks (like aiming, dodging, that sort of thing) for you. Since this gives you a big advantage over a mere human, netrek has a way of knowing whether you have a client that was compiled by the netrek Gods or by you. If you compiled it, netrek will assume it's a cyborg, and will kick you out if it's not cyborg hours. Check the Netrek Server List for cyborg hours of the servers; sometimes they're legal, sometimes they aren't.

There are several different messages you can get when your binary isn't what the server is expecting:

1: "User binary failed to verify."

The server is expecting a standard blessed client; read the netrek FTP list to find out where you can get one.

2: "No customized binaries. Please use a blessed one."

You have an RSA client, but the key for your client isn't on the list. Mail the server god if you think your key should be included.

3: "You need a spiffy new RSA client for this server!"

You have a standard blessed client (or an unblessed client) but the server accepts only RSA clients; read the netrek FTP list to find out where you can get one.

If you are interested in playing a cyborg, get the source from one of the FTP sites and start hacking, or download one of the public cyborgs. It's probably not a good idea for new players to use cyborgs; cyborg players get called lots of nasty names, and they tend not to learn how to play the game (since their client is doing most of the work). There is a mailing list for borg authors, mail trekwriter-request@b62103.student.cwru.edu to get on it.

Subject: 10. The game runs fine, but when the Netrek window comes up, I can't type anything into it. How can I fix this?

This is a problem under a few window managers (OpenWindows and ovlwm, for example); it's netrek's fault, but you can fix it by adding the line "<window manager name>.FocusLenience: True" to your .Xdefaults file. Log out and log back in and it should work. Also, sometimes moving the mouse cursor out of the netrek window and back in will fix it.

Subject: 11. OK, the game runs fine and I found a server and logged in, but there doesn't seem to be anyone else around. How can I find a game with people in it?

Andy McFadden has written a nice little utility called Metaserver II (based on METASERVER, written by ERic Mehlhaff) that will tell you where there are active games. `telnet metaserver.ecst.csuchico.edu 3520` lists all known servers and current number of players. You can also try `telnet metaserver.ecst.csuchico 3521, 3522, 3523, or 3524` for more information.

Subject: 12. OK, now I'm in a game with other people. What do I do?

The first thing you should do is bring up your message window (by hitting '?') and your player list (by hitting 'L'). Pressing a number key chooses your warp speed. The left mouse button fires torpedos at your cursor, the middle mouse button fires phasers at your cursor, and the right mouse button turns your ship towards your cursor. Hitting 'h' will bring up a help window with a list of basic commands.

Subject: 13. When I'm playing the game, people keep sending messages to me. How can I talk back to them?

On the bottom right-hand side of your main window you'll see two long boxes. The top one is where messages like "Not enough fuel for phaser" come up just before you die. The bottom one is the one you use to talk to people. Move your cursor down there and type a character to choose who to send the message to: 'A' for ALL, the capitalized team letter for the team (i.e., 'F' for Federation), or the player number for a message to a single player (i.e., 'c' to send to Rc). Type your message and hit enter when you're done. Don't do this in combat.

Subject: 14. I would like to change what some of the keys do; for example, I'd like 't' instead of 'T' to activate my tractor beam. Is there a way to do this?

There are two ways: first, do a shift-O. This brings up the options window. Near the bottom there is a box for 'New keymap entries'. Move your cursor to this box and type your new keymap entries. The format is <newchar><oldchar>, so 'tT' will remap tractor beam to 't'.

Netrek also recognizes a .xtrekr file; a 'keymap:' line in there will allow you to map as many as you want. Format is the same as above.

If you forget where you mapped a key, remapping it to itself ('ee', for example) will reset that keymap.

Subject: 15. How does the rating/promotion system work?

Do a shift-I on yourself; you'll see four ratings there, one for planets, one for bombing, one for offense, and one for defense. The planet, bombing, and offense ratings are measured in DI/hour; for each planet you take, army you bomb, and player you kill you get a certain amount of DI (which varies depending on the server)--the average amount per hour is your rating. Your rating is equal to (your DI/your hours)/(total DI/total hours); therefore, if you have a bombing rating of 2.0, you bomb twice as many armies as the average person on the server. This is true for all ratings. All ratings are updated only in t-mode.

Now do a shift-U. Listed there are the thresholds for each rank. Your overall rating is your planets+bombing+offense. To make a rank, you need to have the DI required for that rank, and your ratings need to be above the rating required for that rank (i.e., to make Admiral, you need 320 DI and your ratings need to be above 8.0). You can also make a ranking by having ratings good enough for a level and *twice* the DI you would need for the next level (So you can make Admiral with ratings of 7.0 and 640 DI). This equation is recursive, so you can also make it with 6.0 ratings and 1280 DI (which would take about 200 hours), or 5.0 ratings and 2560 DI (which would take 500). On some servers the equation is recursive only once, so you can't make ranks on 8xDI.

On some servers, your defense also needs to be above .8 to advance

past Lt. Commander.

Note that suggestions on how to improve the rating system occur about twice a week in rec.games.netrek, and the general consensus is that it isn't worth the hassle.

Subject: 16. I keep dying. How can I get better at the game?

The best way is probably to talk with someone who knows how to play. There is also an archive of hints and suggestions on how to play better; read the Netrek FTP List to find out where it is located.

Subject: 17. What is 't-mode'?

T-mode is short for 'tournament mode.' To keep some integrity in the database, ratings are calculated only when there are a certain number of people in the game (actually, when there are a certain number of people on two separate teams. On many servers, you need 4 players on 2 different teams; 4 teams of 2 players won't do it). When the game goes into t-mode, there will be a 't' flag in your list of flags, and there will be a message like "Dan Quayle declares self as Galactic Emperor and chaos breaks out!" When the game drops out of t-mode (because someone quit), the 't' flag will disappear and there'll be a "Dan Quayle is locked up and order returns to the galaxy" message.

It's generally considered rude to bomb or take planets out of t-mode. Some servers punish people for trying.

Subject: 18. What does DI stand for, anyway?

Destruction Inflicted.

Subject: 19. Some of the servers and clients are called 'UDP'; what does that mean?

UDP is a network protocol that is much more lenient than TCP (which is what netrek originally used). If you don't have a local server, using a UDP client on a UDP server could reduce your lag considerably. Read the Netrek FTP List to find out where you can get a UDP client. (Many thanks to Andy McFadden, Netrek Guru, for implementing the UDP stuff).

Subject: 20. Some of the servers and clients are called 'RSA'; what does that mean?

RSA is a new way for servers to make sure that players are not using cyborg clients. The RSA package generates a header file containing a public and a private encryption key. These keys are compiled into the client; the private key encrypts the data and the public key decrypts it. The main advantage of RSA over the old reserved.c

Subject: 21. I keep reading about the INL; what is it?

Subject: 22. I have some ideas and/or bug fixes for the INL server; where should I send them?

Subject: 23. I'm looking at stats from a clue/INL game; what do all the abbreviations mean?

Planets	Armies	Kills	Deaths
-----	-----	Good-----	Bad-----

fck: Friendly carriers killed (see fao).

def: Deaths by enemy fire.

acc: Actual carriers created; people who got their first kill from me and picked up armies, or who got their second kill from me and picked up 3 or more armies.

Subject: 24. Where can I get the most recent copy of this FAQ list?

You can either look in the back messages of rec.games.netrek, or get it via anonymous FTP from ftp.csua.berkeley.edu, directory /pub/netrek. It's also in the Usenet archive at rtfm.mit.edu.
telnet metaserver.ecst.csuchico.edu 3524 gives the server information from the server list.

Subject: 25. My GPA has fallen 25% since I started playing Netrek last semester. How do you find time to do your homework and still make Admiral?

Sorry, nobody's found an answer to this one yet. Just remember that (GPA+kill ratio) is constant.

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