

MATRIX CUBED RULE BOOK

SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING
COMPUTER GAME, VOL. II



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◆ INTRODUCTION

What Comes With This Game?

You should find the following items in the game box:

- ◆ Rule Book ◆ Log Book ◆ Disks ◆ Data Card

This Rule Book is designed to explain all your options and guide you through playing *MATRIX CUBED*. If you are not familiar with the BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game system, you can find helpful reference information in the Log Book.

The Log Book contains a variety of information, including details about character careers, technology, combat, and an introduction to the adventure. The Log Book also includes the maps, information, rumors, and stories that you need to play the game. Discover for yourself which of the tales you hear are fact and which are fiction.

The Disks contain the game.

The Data Card explains how to start the game, and select menu options with your specific computer. It also shows how to get right into the game.

Before You Play

There is no copy protection on your *MATRIX CUBED* disks, so please make backup copies and put the originals away for safekeeping. When you start the game, answer a verification question from this Rule Book or the Log Book before you play. Turn to the page indicated in this Rule Book or the Log Book, find the indicated word, type it in, and press Return or Enter.

Getting Started Quickly

MATRIX CUBED comes with a ready-made team that allows you to begin adventuring immediately. Use the instructions on the Data Card to load the saved game that has been provided and begin playing. Use this Rule Book and the Log Book during play.

Using Menus

All commands are menu based, and the concept of the active character is central to the game. Outside of combat the active character's name is highlighted on the display. During combat the active character is surrounded with a cursor at the start of his combat segment.

During combat the active character is chosen automatically according to the characters' initiative and random factors. At other times you may select which character is active before choosing other commands.

If a command affects the whole team, just select the command. If the command affects one character, make that character active and then choose the command.

Vertical menus select the character or item to be acted upon. If there are more choices than will fit on the screen at one time, use the NEXT and PREV commands to view the additional selections.

Horizontal menus list what that character can do or what can be done to the character. In the rules, menus are shown with all of their options. In some cases, options are not be available every time a menu appears.

Note: This Rule Book lists only the general menus. With many encounters, special menus appear with other options.

Beginning to Play

To begin playing the game you must load a saved game, transfer characters from *COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY*, or make new characters and band them together into a team.

CREATE NEW CHARACTER is used to build a character (see "Create New Character Options" on page 3). Detailed information about characters, races, careers and so on is available in the Log Book. This command starts the process of making a new character.

ADD CHARACTER TO TEAM allows you to add characters to the team from the save game disk. A team is a group of characters composed of up to six player characters (called PCs) and up to two non-player characters (called NPCs). A team should have a balanced mix of characters with different careers. For more information about building teams see the Log Book.

LOAD SAVED GAME permits you to resume a game that had been previously saved. For a quick start, the saved game provided with *MATRIX CUBED* can be loaded. You also have the option to load a saved game from *COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY* (see the data card for more details).

INITIALIZE MOUSE/JOYSTICK sets up the joystick or mouse. (Only available on some computer systems.)

EXIT TO DOS/WORKBENCH ends play. (Only available on some computer systems.)

Create New Character Options

- PICK RACE lists six races a player-character can be in the twenty-fifth century.
- PICK GENDER lists the sex the character can be.
- PICK CAREER lists the careers a character is eligible for. The computer randomly generates the character's ability scores. If you are not happy with the scores, you may roll them again. Remember that you can use the MODIFY CHARACTER command on the Team Creation/Training Menu to change the character's ability scores and hit points (HP) after the character has been generated.
- CHARACTER NAME provides a 15 letter space to type in the character's name. (On some computer systems the character is named after the ability scores are generated.)
- ALLOCATE SKILL POINTS allows you to allocate points to the character's Career and then General skills. This phase really determines a character's strengths and weaknesses. See the section on skills in the Log Book for more information.
- SELECT CHARACTER ICON allows you to select the shape to represent the character in

combat. You can select new combat icons from the Training Center menu. (On some systems the character is saved after the combat icon is selected.)

- EXIT from any of the character creation menus displays the Team Creation Menu.

♦ MODIFYING CHARACTERS AND TEAMS

Team Creation/Training

The Team Creation/Training Menu shows the characters currently in your team and lists the commands for creating and modifying the team. Not all of the options are available at all times.

PURGE CHARACTER eliminates a character from the team and erases him from the saved game disk. A purged character may not be recovered.

MODIFY CHARACTER can change the character's ability scores and hit points. Use MODIFY CHARACTER to change a character generated in *MATRIX CUBED* to match a favorite BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game character. A character cannot be modified once you begin adventuring.

ICON SELECT allows you to select a new icon to represent a character in combat.

TRAIN CHARACTER increases a character's level when he has gained enough experience points (EXP). Characters can only advance one level at a time. If a character has gained enough experience to advance more than one level, he advances one level and then loses all experience in excess of one point below that required for advancement to the next level.

Characters get additional points to allocate to skills as they advance, and Warriors gain weapon skills. See "Advancement Tables" in the Log Book for experience point requirements. There is no charge for training characters.

VIEW CHARACTER displays information about a character. For more information see the "Viewing Characters" section below.

REMOVE CHARACTER FROM TEAM transfers a character from the team to the saved game disk.

SAVE CURRENT GAME stores the current game to the save game disk or directory.

BEGIN ADVENTURING starts the game.

EXIT TO DOS/WORKBENCH quits the game.

Non-Player Characters

During the game the team encounters non-player characters (NPCs). They may offer to join the team. NPCs that join the team are treated like player characters with a few differences. The computer generally commands these NPCs in battle. Characters with Leadership skill may be able to put NPCs who have joined the party under direct control.

Viewing Characters

The VIEW command displays the character summary screen.

Encumbrance is the total weight the character is carrying. As a character becomes more encumbered, his combat movement speed drops. Encumbrance is based on the weight a character carries above the weight allowable by strength.

Combat Movement is how many squares a character can move during a combat round. This is based on his readied armor, strength, and total encumbrance.

Character Status

OKAY means that the character has positive hit points and can move and fight normally.

POISONED means that the character is suffering from the effects of some poison, and must have a medic perform a Treat Poison immediately after combat or become Comatose.

UNCONSCIOUS means that the character has exactly 0 hit points. The character cannot move or fight, but is in no danger of dying.

COMATOSE means that the character is severely injured and has lapsed into a coma. Comatose characters require hospitalization or shipboard Medical Center care to recover.

DEAD means that the character has died.

FLED means that the character fled from the battle. After the battle he rejoins the team.

GONE means that the character was abandoned during a combat and has been lost forever.

View Menu

From the View Menu several options are available to inspect the active character. Not all of these commands are available at all times.

GEAR SKILLS WPN SPEC TRADE EXIT

GEAR shows all the equipment the character is carrying. Items preceded by a YES are ready for use. Not all commands in the Gear Menu are always available (see "Gear Menu" below).

SKILLS lists all the skills that the character has.

WPN SPEC allows Warriors to examine their weapon specialization bonuses.

TRADE on the View Menu is used to transfer credits from one character to another. Indicate which character is to receive, and then indicate what and how much is traded to the other character. (On some systems this option is only available if you select the View Menu from outpost shops or from the Booty Menu after combat.)

EXIT returns you to the previous screen.

Gear Menu

READY TRADE DROP HALVE JOIN SELL EXIT

- **READY** is used to change the ready status of a weapon, armor, or other item. Only readied gear can be used in combat. Characters can only ready one weapon at a time, except that a grenade can be readied while a character has a readied grenade launcher.
- **TRADE** on the Gear Menu is used to transfer an item from one character to another. Choose the item and then the character to receive it. Remember that a conscious NPC does not give up an item once he has it.
- **DROP** permanently removes items from a character. Dropped items may not be recovered.
- **HALVE** divides a bundle of grenades or poison antidotes into two bundles. For example, halve would turn one bundle of 24 grenades into two groups of 12 each.
- **JOIN** combines grenades and poison antidotes into one line of the gear list. No more than 100 items can be joined onto one line. This is handy because there are a limited number of slots available on a gear list.
- **SELL** (only available at shops) causes the shopkeeper to make an offer on the highlighted item. Sold gear may not be recovered.
- **EXIT** returns you to the View Menu screen.

◆ ADVENTURING

After setting up your team and reading the background information in the Log Book, it is time to head for adventure, fame, and glory.

Display Screens and Points of View

During the adventure, teams must travel from planet surfaces to the reaches of space. There are several points of view or areas that are displayed for different regions.

3-D and Area Views

3-D view appears in cities, aboard enemy rocket ships and so on. This view appears at the top left of your screen and shows the surrounding area from the team's perspective. Rotate the team's facing and move using the directional controls. The direction controls for your computer are described on the Data Card.

Area view provides an overhead view of the team's surroundings, replacing the 3-D view. Choose the **AREA** command from the Adventure Menu. This view is available only in special regions. In the area display a cursor shows the team's position. On some computer systems, the cursor is an arrow that indicates current team facing. On some computer systems you may move around while in the area view, on others this view is only to help you get your bearings.

To the right of the point of view window, in either 3-D or Area, are the map coordinates, current time, facing direction (N, S, W, E) and what the team is doing.

Combat View

Combat view occurs automatically whenever the team engages in battle. The combat screen is a detailed view of the area the team was in when the encounter began.

Overland Map

This view displays a large region and is used to move across planetary surfaces. Move the team with normal direction controls.

Solar Map

Solar Map view is used when the team is traveling in its rocket ship. Simply move the ship towards the destination as you would move in any other view. The difference between this view and others is that destinations are orbiting the sun, and they move as the ship does. Each move on the solar map takes three days of game time.

Adventuring Options

The Adventure Menu controls normal game options while exploring or traveling between planets or outposts. While traveling on the solar map, only certain commands are available.

Adventure Menu

MOVE AREA VIEW LOOK CHANGE ROCKET SAVE

MOVE is used to move the team around the map. The team can turn right or left, turn around, or move forward. Refer to the Data Card for computer-specific movement information. Select **EXIT** to return to the Adventure Menu.

AREA toggles between the area and 3-D view (not available in many regions).

VIEW displays the character screen and the View Menu.

LOOK is used to search an individual square. Looking in a square takes ten minutes of game time.

CHANGE is used to change the characters in the team and the parameters of the game (see "Change Menu" below).

ROCKET is used to examine the team's rocket ship. This is only available during space travel, and may not be available on all computer systems.

SAVE stores the characters and current game to the save game disk or directory. Saved games may be loaded either from the first menu or from the Team Creation/Training Menu. Save often — especially before and after really tough encounters. See your Data Card for computer-specific saving instructions.

Change Menu

ORDER PURGE MESSAGES ANIM LEVEL EXIT

- **ORDER** changes how the characters are listed on the screen and how they are deployed in combat. Characters at the top of the list are on the front line of combat.
- **PURGE** eliminates a character from the team and erases him from the saved game disk. A purged character is gone forever and may not be recovered.
- **MESSAGES** controls the rate at which messages are printed on the screen. If the game is running too slowly, use the **FASTER** command to speed up the displays. If messages go by too quickly, try the **SLOWER** command.
- **ANIM** allows you to toggle the animation of the close-up pictures on and off. Turning the animation off speeds up the game. This command is not available on all computers.
- **LEVEL** allows you to adjust combat difficulty (see "Level Menu" below).
- **EXIT** returns you to the Adventure Menu.

Level Menu

NOVICE CADET TROOPER VETERAN ACE

The game is preset at the Trooper level. This is the level at which we consider the game to be balanced. To make the combats easier, choose either the Novice (easiest) or Cadet level. To make the combats more difficult, choose either the Veteran or Ace (hardest) level.

When you choose to make the game more difficult, you are rewarded by receiving more experience points in combat. When you choose to make the game easier, you are penalized by receiving fewer experience points from your combats.

Receiving fewer experience points slows the rate at which your characters advance levels. Advancing at a slower rate gives you less powerful characters which, in the long run, may more than offset the benefits of playing at an "easy" level.

◆ OUTPOSTS

Outposts are where teams can purchase new gear and ammunition, ship repairs, and fuel.

Outpost Menu

The Outpost Menu allows the team to get to the various facilities that may be found in outposts. Larger stations, of course, have a greater variety of services to offer than the smaller frontier outposts.

BANK DOWNTOWN HOSPITAL PORT TRAINING

BANK allows you to deposit credits for safekeeping. An extensive computer network keeps track of accounts so that you may withdraw your funds from any branch in the solar system (see "Bank Menu" below).

DOWNTOWN is where shops, restaurants, and so on are located (see "Downtown Menu" below).

HOSPITAL offers first rate medical services, for a fee.

PORT is where ships are repaired, resupplied, fueled, and launched. Everything in port is paid for from the team's NEO salvage account. This is the account that is credited with the salvage value for enemy ships the team has defeated. At Salvation Station port facilities and materials are free. All other stations charge the going rates (see "Port Menu" below).

TRAINING allows characters to go to a Training Center and advance in level. You can also modify the team using the Team Creation/Training Menu.

Bank Menu

DEPOSIT WITHDRAW TRANSFER EXIT

- **DEPOSIT** prompts you for the number of credits you wish to deposit.
- **WITHDRAW** allows funds to be retrieved from the team account.
- **TRANSFER** moves credits from the team account to the NEO account.
- **EXIT** returns to the Outpost Menu.

Downtown Menu

BAR LIBRARY RESTAURANT SHOP EXIT

- **BAR** and **RESTAURANT** are places where characters go to hear the latest gossip and news.
- **LIBRARY** is where the team goes to get information. To effectively use a library, at least one character needs to have Library Search skill.
- **SHOP** allows characters to buy and sell equipment (see Shop Menu below).
- **EXIT** returns you to the previous menu.

Shop Menu

BUY SELL AMMO VIEW POOL TAKE DIVVY EXIT

- **BUY** displays the available gear and costs. Select items for the active character to buy.
- **SELL** puts you in the Gear Menu with the **SELL** option highlighted. If this option is not available on your system, then select the **View** option, then the **Gear** option and then choose **Sell**.
- **AMMO** is used to purchase ammunition for a character's weapons. This includes recharges for battery packs on energy weapons such as lasers.
- **VIEW** displays the character screen with the **SELL** command available in the Gear Menu.
- **POOL** places all of the team's credits into a pool which can be used by any member to make purchases. Use the **TAKE** or **DIVVY** commands to pick up the credits pool after all purchases have been made.

- TAKE is used to pick up credits from the team credits pool.
- DIVVY picks up everything from the pool and distributes even shares among the team.
- EXIT returns to the Outpost Menu.

Port Menu

LAUNCH REPAIR FUEL AMMO MED SUP EXIT

- LAUNCH exits the outpost and puts the team in space.
- REPAIR has your ship repaired at the port shipyards. The cost of repairs varies with the *amount of work required*.
- FUEL allows you to purchase fuel for your ship.
- AMMO allows you to purchase ammunition for your ship's weapons.
- MED SUP allows the team to restock the shipboard Medical Center.
- EXIT returns to the Outpost Menu.

◆ COMBAT

During combat the computer chooses the active character. Characters with higher dexterity tend to go before characters with lower dexterity. A character may hold his action until later with the WAIT command. There is a detailed description of how combat works in the Log Book.

The active character is centered on the screen at the start of his combat segment. The active character's name, hit points, armor class, and current weapon are displayed. The Combat Menu lists the character's options.

Combat Menu

MOVE TARGET VIEW INTIMIDATE QUICK AID SPRINT DODGE JETPACK WAIT GUARD END

MOVE allows a character to move normally. Characters can attack with combat weapons by attempting to move into an opponent's square.

TARGET allows weapons to be aimed. If the character has shot an opponent in a previous segment, the cursor comes up on that target (see Target Menu on page 10).

When targeting, the range to the target appears above the menu bar on some systems. If a character moves adjacent to an enemy, and has no more movement remaining, the TARGET command can be used to attack with a melee weapon (mono knife, sword, etc.). The TARGET command can also be used to survey the condition of your team and enemies. As you move the target cursor over a character or opponent, hit points and weapon information appears on the right of your screen.

For more information, refer to "Target Menu" on page 10.

VIEW displays the character screen and View Menu.

INTIMIDATE is the skill to project an aura of menace and to frighten adjacent opponents. Intimidated opponents are too frightened to move or fight for one round.

QUICK turns control of the character over to the computer. Press the space bar to regain manual control of characters. Under computer control, a fighting character with a readied missile weapon tends to hang back and attack from a distance. If the character has no readied ranged weapon, he or she readies a melee weapon and charges.

Characters remain under computer control for all subsequent combats until manual control is again selected.

AID only appears if a team member is bleeding to death. Only characters with First Aid or Treat Light Wounds skills can use this command. The command performs either First Aid or Treat Light Wounds, depending on the character's abilities. Also, medics with the Treat Stun/Paralysis skill can use the AID command to treat stunned characters. The team member using the AID command must be adjacent to the victim.

SPRINT allows a player to run double the normal combat move distance. The character cannot shoot or guard after sprinting.

Note: If a character selects SPRINT or DODGE, all further movement by that character during that round is sprinting or dodging.

DODGE has the character move and try to evade enemy fire at the same time. The character receives a temporary armor class bonus that increases as he advances in level. The character cannot do anything else in the same segment—including attack or fire weapons.

JETPACK allows a character with a jet pack to fly over the battle to any square in range. Anyone with a ranged weapon attacking a character using JETPACK is firing at long range. Any opponents guarding in squares adjacent to the destination square can attack when the character lands. JETPACK can only be used in outdoor fights, and the character must have a jet pack and Use Jet Pack skill.

WAIT causes the character to hold his turn until after the other characters/opponents have acted.

GUARD sets a character armed with a ranged, non-area effect weapon (laser rifle, bolt gun, etc.) to fire automatically at the first opponent to move. Characters armed with melee weapons attack the first opponent to move into an adjacent square.

END finishes a character's turn.

Target Menu

NEXT PREV MANUAL ATTACK CENTER EXIT

- NEXT is used to look at all possible targets, starting with the closest target and then going to the next farthest and so on. NEXT and PREV only indicate targets in the character's line of sight.
- PREV (Previous) is the opposite of the NEXT command. Use this command to look at the possible targets starting with the farthest, and working back toward the character. This command is most often used to select a target for a missile attack.

- **MANUAL** permits the player to aim anywhere on the map. Only targets in the character's line of sight can actually be attacked.
- **ATTACK** is used to fire a weapon, throw a grenade, or attack an adjacent enemy with a melee weapon (mono knife, sword, etc.). If this option is not displayed the target is out of range or not in line of sight.
- **CENTER** centers the screen around the cursor. This is helpful when manually targeting. This option is not available on all computer systems.
- **EXIT** returns you to the Combat Menu.

After the Battle

When combat is over, team medics treat wounded characters and you see how much experience each character receives. Most of the Booty Menu commands work like the commands in the Shop Menus.

Space Combat

Space travel is filled with the constant threat of enemy warships. In space combat there are two basic menus; one for the pilot, and another for the crew. Not all options in space combat menus are available at all times.

Pilot Menu

FIRE TARGET QUIT VIEW CLOSE WITHDRAW RAM BOARD

FIRE allows the pilot to attack with the ship's K-cannons and missiles. This attack has the greatest chance to hit, and affects random systems on the enemy ship.

TARGET allows the pilot to fire the ship's K-cannons and missiles at specific systems on the enemy ship. Targeting is more difficult than the general **FIRE** command.

QUIT ends the pilot's turn.

VIEW allows you to examine either the ship or the pilot.

CLOSE shortens the distance between your ship and the enemy ship. If the enemy ship is faster than yours and attempts to **WITHDRAW**, you cannot close in on it.

WITHDRAW attempts to escape the enemy ship. If your ship is slower than the enemy ship, you cannot disengage.

RAM is an attempt to crash your ship into the enemy ship. **RAM** uses the pilot's Pilot Rocket skill to determine success. When ships ram, the damage inflicted on each ship is the tonnage of the other ship. For example, if a 150 ton ship rams a 50 ton ship, the larger ship suffers 50 points of hull damage while the smaller ship suffers 150 points of hull damage.

BOARD is only available if the enemy ship can no longer maneuver and the range is zero or one. When you board, your team docks with the enemy ship's airlock and must fight their way in. Then your team must find a way to secure the enemy ship's controls.

Crew Menu

FIRE TARGET LOAD JURYRIG QUIT VIEW COMMAND AID BOOST ENGINES SENSORS

FIRE is similar to **FIRE** from the Pilot Menu command, except that crew members may only fire lasers.

TARGET is similar to **TARGET** from the Pilot Menu command, except that crew members may only fire lasers.

LOAD reloads ship's weapons. This command only appears when a weapon is empty or not fully loaded. When you select **LOAD**, the weapons ready for loading are displayed.

JURYRIG appears when some weapon or system has been damaged, and if the character has the Jury Rig skill. Ship's systems can only be successfully jury rigged once per battle. Weapons can be jury rigged whenever they are nonfunctional. The chance for success and degree of accomplishment is based on the character's skill level. When this command is selected a menu of damaged systems comes up.

QUIT ends the character's turn.

VIEW allows you to examine either the ship or the character.

COMMAND only appears when the pilot is dead or incapacitated. **COMMAND** orders the current character to take control and pilot the ship. Remember: Put a character with good Pilot Rocketship skill into the pilot's position if the first pilot is incapacitated — this skill is crucial in space combat.

AID only appears when a character is bleeding to death, and the current character has either a Treat Light Wounds, or First Aid skill.

BOOST ENGINES attempts to squeeze extra speed from the rocket engines. This command only appears if the current character has Nuclear Engine Repair skill. The engines may be damaged if the skill check fails. Engines can only be boosted successfully twice during a battle.

SENSORS only appears if the current character has Sensor Operation skill. This attempts to probe the enemy ship.

JUPITER IS NOT A GOOD PLACE FOR A VACATION.

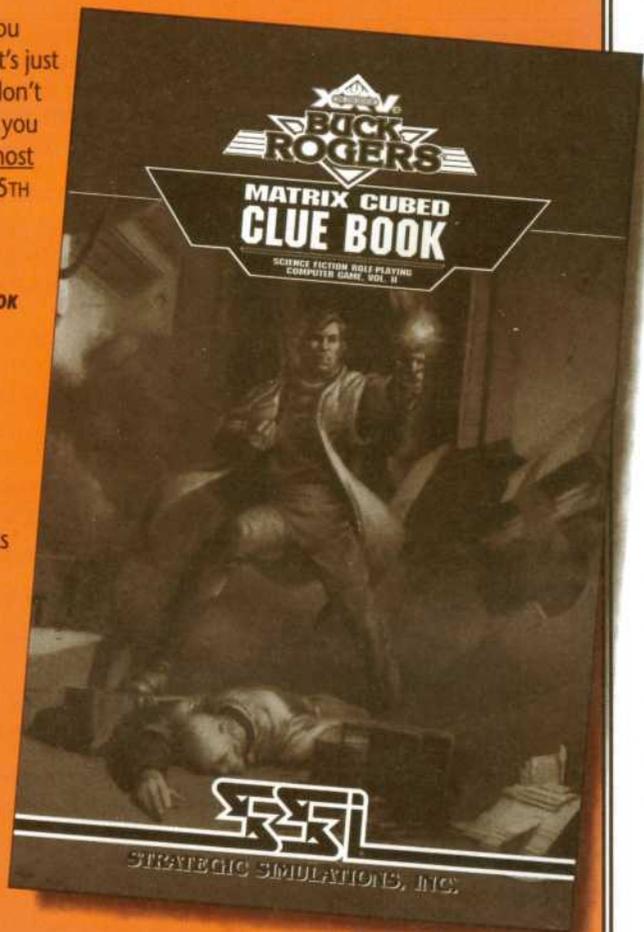
But you know that. What you *don't* know is that... well, let's just say that there's *plenty* you don't know about Jupiter. In fact, you may be in the dark about most of what's going on in the 25TH century. *Get a clue before something gets you!*

The **MATRIX CUBED CLUE BOOK** is packed with facts – it's *required reading* for all futuristic freedom fighters! Here's what you get:

- ★ *Detailed maps* for the entire game, including locations of all major events in the adventure.
- ★ *Combat tips* that allow you to defeat even the toughest opponents.
- ★ *Lists* of useful skills and where to use them.

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