

TRANSPORT TYCOON

by

MICRO PROSE

FORMAT: PC/PC CD-ROM

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PRICE: N/A

Ever since I discovered Transport Tycoon at the last ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) in London, I have not ceased thinking about the release date for this fabulous game. The two long months of waiting were really unbearable and I still ask myself how I survived them. Nevertheless, since patience is one of my virtues (among many I modestly admit), and patience is always rewarded, "Transport Tycoon" is finally available.

Fascinated by the "Sim City" style of games, considered a classic in this category, I have always enjoyed playing this type of game. It is most captivating because you build an entire world without limitations regarding time or the number of missions.

Transport Tycoon is a game of exactly the same style but which, without a doubt, establishes a benchmark for this style of game. Contrary to Sim City 2000, where the player must build an urban area equipped with public transportation, Transport Tycoon puts you in charge of a transportation company, involving roads, railroads, shiplines and airlines. Your role will be to transport the people between different cities and to move merchandise between production and consumer areas. The goal of the game is to manage your company for a 100 year period from 1930 until 2030 by increasing your transportation network and avoiding bankruptcy.

The game offers an isometric view in three dimensions with magnificent high resolution (SVGA) graphics. By clicking on a vehicle, a window opens up allowing you to watch the vehicle move about, even when you are busy on another region of the map. You can also change its itinerary, inquire about the transportation rating, survey the type of cargo, etc...

If you decide to start with roads, you will have to establish a connection between two cities for passenger and mail transport, or between a production site of base materials to the factory where they will be treated. To accomplish this, you will have to level the terrain, or construct bridges and tunnels. Of course, all this costs money and you will have to plan your route while trying to minimize costs (A piece of advice: do not try to fill the shores or the lakes as this really costs a fortune!)

With this done, you will still have to build one or more road depots, and in each city, loading bays for the merchandise, and bus stations for the passengers. Afterwards, you will have to buy one or more buses and some trucks specialised for the merchandise they will transport.

Finally, you will have to attribute a precise itinerary for each vehicle. For example, a truck transporting wood, will need a loading bay in proximity of a forest, and a loading bay destination near a sawmill.

Different places of raw material production exist: there are the coal and iron ore mines, forests, farms and

the land based drills. These materials can be brought to factories capable of producing goods with them. For example, the iron ore first transformed into steel in the steel mill, will finally be utilised in the factory for fabrication of goods. Notice that this transformation requires two different stages, first from the iron ore mine towards the steel mill, and second from the steel mill to the factory.

We could still talk about the transportation of coal towards the power station or even that of livestock and grain towards the factory, but we will let you discover the other possibilities of "Transport Tycoon".

So far we have given a brief description of the first transportation way, roads. However, there are still the trains, boats and airplanes mentioned above. It's when you add up all these different ways of communication that Transport Tycoon takes on its true dimension.

Adding the railroad, you will have the choice of stations with one, two, three and even four tracks, switching, crossings, warehouses, and signals (to avoid collisions between two trains operating only on one track!). You can also construct bridges (from simple bridges made of wood to those made of steel for high speed trains) and tunnels. Your choice of locomotive is important because you have to take into account the operating costs per year, traction capacity, reliability, etc.. During the course of time technology evolves, and new models are proposed during the game. You will even have the unique possibility to use prototypes during their first year of production. If you refuse to use them, they will be offered to your competitors. Know that using a prototype will mean many break downs and that if you accept the offer without buying one in the future, there is a great possibility that these types of offers will no longer be proposed to you.

Each wagon has its own characteristics just like the trucks do. Make sure you use each one to its best abilities to maximise profits. To this effect, it is not a good idea to use passenger wagons to transport livestock.

The transportation of passengers and merchandise by trains, boats, and airplanes, being based on the same principle as that of the roads, will not be explained here.

For the boats, there is no need to construct roads, since they exist already in the form of oceans. You will have to build ship docks in proximity of the manufacturing areas and one or more ship depots to put your ships in storage. The boats are not exclusively used for transporting merchandise because it is also possible to transport passengers by ferries and hovercrafts. Ships have an advantage over the other means of transportation in that they benefit from a larger transportation capacity.

Finally for airplanes, you will have possibilities to build two types of airports (small or large) with a Junker Ju-52 as your first plane. Like trains, different more powerful aircrafts will appear during the course of time, like the Douglas DC-3 Dakota. Here, speed is the major difference but the transportation capacities are not great.

To attract tourists and industries, a good publicity campagne is required. This is exactly what you can do to attract more business for your bus and train stations, your airports, etc... when activity is at a low. To avoid having to make this costly decision, you will need to watch attentively what the people think of your different stations and to take the necessary actions to provide a better service.

Up to now we have not talked about your competitors (yes, there are some! It would have been too easy without any competition). Following the difficulty levels, the number of competitors increase from two for the easy level to four for the harder level. However, it is still possible to customize the difficulty levels with the number of competitors, the frequency of break downs, the operating costs, etc... You can also play "Transport Tycoon" with two players via a null modem cable which gives a true feeling of competition.

Conclusion:

What is impressive about "Transport Tycoon" is the extensive details for example, the smoke from the steam locomotives, the railroad signals that change or even the railroad crossing. The animation is realistic, up-paced, and so beautiful!

"Transport Tycoon" is probably the game of the year with its impeccable achievements in sound effects, music and graphics, and by its tremendous interest. A game that will, without a doubt, sell marvellously as a representative of MicroProse predicted to me at the ECTS.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

386-33 Mhz or better,
Min 4Mb memory, MS-DOS 5.0 or higher,
Hard drive,
SVGA 256 colors graphic card and monitor,
Mouse recommended,
Sound Blaster and 100% Compatibles, Sound Blaster AWE 32, Gravis UltraSound Pro Audio Spectrum, Sound Canvas, Roland LAPC-1/MT-32, General Midi sound cards supported.

GRAPHICS-----	95%	MicroProse Ltd.
SOUND -----	90%	The Ridge, Chipping Sodbury,
MUSIC -----	90%	Bristol BS17 6AY, England.
GAMEPLAY-----	95%	Tel: +44-(0)454-326-532
INTEREST-----	98%	MicroProse Inc.
		180 Lakefront Drive,
		Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245
OVERALL -----	94%	Tel: 410-771-0440
		800-879-7529
		BBS: 410-785-1841

