

14 Years On, The Free-to-Play OpenTTD is as Good as Ever

By Robert Gammon-Ross • 31 May 2018



Trains, planes and automobiles... also boats.

There are more and more free games being released, but I can't help coming back to OpenTTD.

What even is OpenTTD?

OpenTTD stands for *Open Transport Tycoon Deluxe*. It's an open source version of 1995's *Transport Tycoon Deluxe*, a game produced by Chris Sawyer of *RollerCoaster Tycoon* fame. Originally released in 2004, there is still an extremely active community that supports, mods and updates *OpenTTD* so it can run on various platforms. In fact, now 14 years later, the game has only just released its 1.8 model and it's as popular as ever.

I first picked up this game in my first year of university after my friend Joe showed it to me. As a young student, I was more than happy to waste my time playing computer games – especially free ones.

What do you do?

In *OpenTTD* you have one single dream; a dream to become as filthy rich as possible through developing your own transport company. Starting with a small loan of a few hundred thousand quid, you can build your wealth to levels that even Scrooge McDuck would be jealous of. All you have to do is build the transport networks needed to ship products, people and goods to the necessary places in return for a healthy profit.

OpenTTD gives you the option to secure your wealth with planes, trains, trucks and ferries. However you choose to ferry your chosen goods, you'll need to build an adequate infrastructure and plan the best routes. All of this can be as complicated or as simple as you desire, but profit tends to come to those who can be as efficient as possible. While I find boats, planes and trucks fun to use, it truly is trains that make this game tick. Building long, winding tracks into a bustling network of trains of different shapes, sizes and purposes is the nitty gritty of *OpenTTD* and where all of the fun comes from. Playing *OpenTTD* makes me feel like Richard Branson and Eddie Stobart's love child.



Multiplayer

Multiplayer is where *OpenTTD* tickles me the most. Joe and I would play for hours hopelessly building our networks around each other. Joe never really got the hang of trains so would become a simple bus company – not such a surprise that he works for TfL now. I would be much more ambitious by building snaking railway lines over the map before something inevitably went wrong.

Eventually we would devolve into corporate sabotage, probably the most fun you can have on a multiplayer server. We would build truck routes to deliberately roadblock another company, destroy the population of a vital trading city, or we would simply place a road where someone else needed a rail line. Officially *OpenTTD* can host a maximum of 255 people, but Joe and I wouldn't have stood a chance on a server that big.

At the moment I am reigniting my passion for *OpenTTD* with mods. There's a whole host of community mods that vary from texture packs to AI enhancements. You can change the whole philosophy of the game with a simple mod installation. There is even a mod so you can play in the world of Westeros. Now if you'll excuse me, I have important items to ship to King's Landing...