Tweaking the Game

Graphics
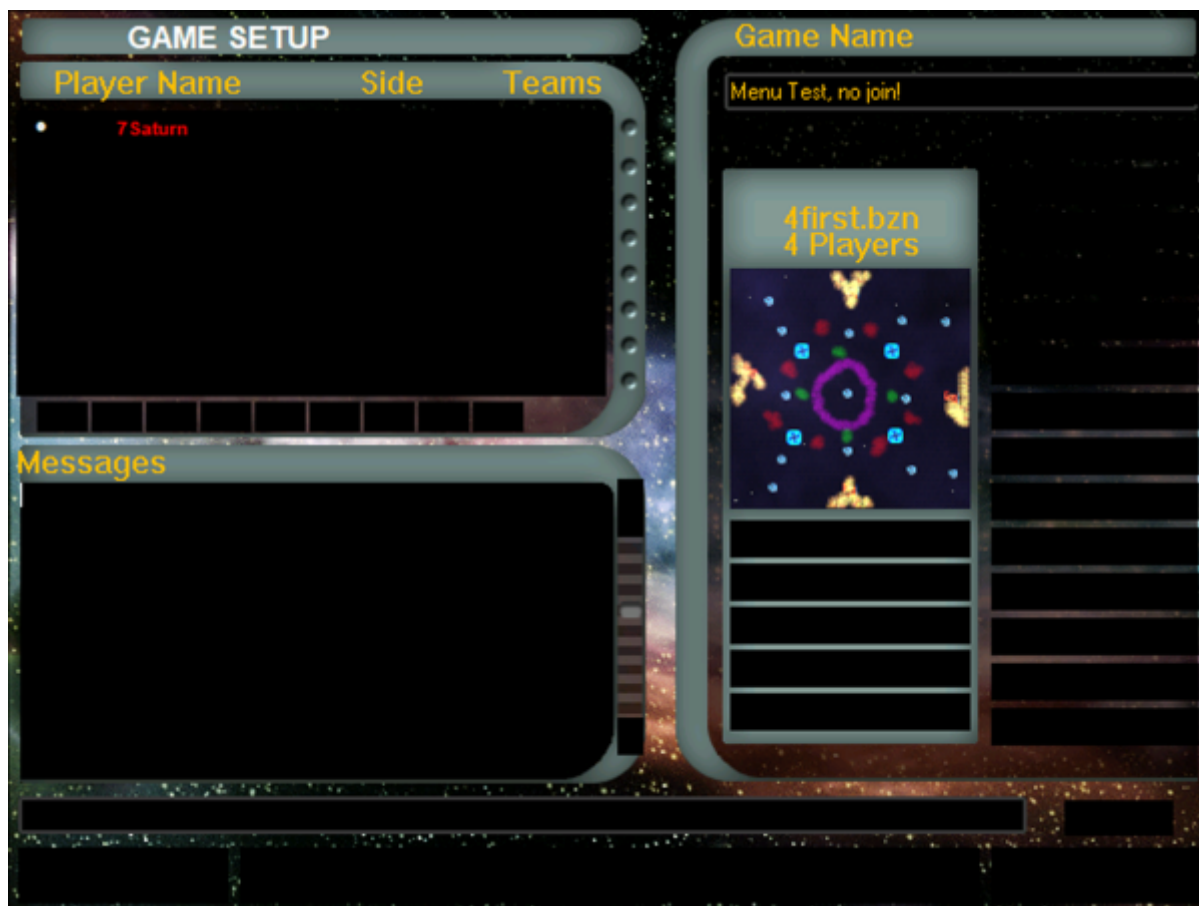
Problems When Using High Resolutions

The game is in general a bit sluggish when it comes to controls. But you can compensate with lower resolutions, especially on slower systems. It doesn't look so great, but it's certainly more pleasant than dropped inputs and slow reactions. See also Graphics Settings on the matter.

By default the game only offers 4:3 resolution. With the 1.3 patch is also allows for wide-screen resolutions.

Important: It is a known problem for the Armada 1 CD version to not run with resolutions beyond full HD (1920×1080). The game lets you set higher resolutions. But when trying to actually start a game, the game crashes to the desktop and resets the setting to safe 640×480. See also section Too High Resolutions Crash the Game on the matter.

ALT + TABing

The game is highly sensitive for using ALT + TAB . Crashes and messed up display are not rare when using the stock game. Example, when having a lobby open:

This happens when you ALT + TAB and come back later. This is especially frustrating, when you are waiting for other players and decide to do something else in the meantime. So with the stock game it is best to avoid it.

For the GoG version of the game there is the possibility of getting rid of this problem by using the DirectX Wrapper which comes delivered with the game. Setting *Presentation:* to *Windowed* makes the game **a lot** more resilient in terms of crashes as well as avoiding the above shown black menu effect.

GOG DirectX Wrapper

The GOG release of the game comes with the gog.com DirectX Wrapper. It allows for an adjustment of the game's optical properties. However, it is recommended to use the following settings:

- *Display mode*: Do not use a particular resolution or the desktop resolution. Instead, set it to *Set by application*. This way the game selects the resolutions and it will work as expected. Otherwise you might end up using not the desired resolution (e.g. setting 3840×2160 in-game is well possible with the 1.3 patch and similar techniques, but when you override this with another resolution with the wrapper, let's say, full HD, then the game will use full HD instead).
- *Presentation*: Should work either way, but it seems to have a few beneficial side-effects:
    - The game gets more ALT + TAB resilient if you use *Windowed* instead of *Fullscreen* or *Set by application (Default)*.
    - The switching between menus and in-game view is faster.
    - There are reports by some players that using *Windowed* mode increased their frame rate. (Can be checked with the in-game FPS indicator, see RTS_CFG.h on the matter.) Others could not reproduce the effect. So it might depend on your setup, whether this is beneficial in terms of FPS.

- *Aspect ratio correction*: Use it.
- *Scaling method*: Use *Screen fit (Default)*. The alternative of *Integer scaling* works, but looks horrible for fonts.
- *Vertical synchronization*: Deactivate it (setting *Disabled*). With an unaltered game the FPS are usually already far below what any current screen provides as a refresh rate. But if you are in a position where the FPS are higher than what your screen allows for, having an extra buffer is still beneficial: The game has a tendency to have frame rate drops, like one moment you have hundreds of FPS, next thing they drop to 150. The same kind of behavior occurs if your FPS are already low, like, dropping from 60 to 20. So having the game not artificially limit the FPS rate makes it less likely to drop to an FPS rate that is really low (higher starting level results in less severe minimum level).
- *Gamma correction*: Use it, if you feel you need that. It can adjust the brightness of the game.
- *Antialiasing*: Do not over-do that! On high resolutions it will enhance the experience. On low resolutions too high of an AA value will make the game look fuzzy.

Increase Zoom

One small annoyance can be remedied if one is not completely satisfied with the standard overview. Armada starts by default zoomed in quite far, which doesn't exactly improve the overview of the events at all. In principle, you can now adjust this zoom by holding down both mouse buttons at the same time or use the - and + keys *of your numbers block*. (The mouse control of this is a bit bumpy, but once you got the hang of it, it works. First the right button, then the left one, in between make sure that you don't move the mouse.) But you can also adjust this setting in the RTS_CFG.h file. There you can find this line:

```
float OVERVIEW_INIT_HEIGHT = 1000.0;
```

That is the value of how far the game *starts* zoomed out when a match or campaign mission is loaded. It is in general useful to use the maximum value here. You can set the maximum value in this line:

```
float OVERVIEW_MAX_HEIGHT = 1000.0;
```

The values `1000.0` are deliberately chosen in this example. If you configure higher settings, parts of the map may start to disappear, due to clipping. You can also increase the clipping distance by adjusting the ART_CFG.h file accordingly. The line with:

```
float FAR_CLIPPING_PLANE = 1400.0;
```

is the reason why you can't see anything on the map that is beyond a certain distance. You can set it generously to `20000.0`. Then you can increase the *OVERVIEW_MAX_HEIGHT* value accordingly. Normally it is sufficient to be in the range of 5000. With this you can already see practically the whole map.

At this point, **a warning is in order**: The larger overview of course requires more computations from the system, so the CPU/GPU load will increase and the game may start to jolt. Especially if many nebulae and other elements have to be rendered, the game jolts even on current computers. Also **some people consider this change to be cheating**, as it gives a player the advantage of a bigger overview over the battle field. The default value for *OVERVIEW_INIT_HEIGHT* is 400 and *OVERVIEW_MAX_HEIGHT* is 700. While setting *OVERVIEW_INIT_HEIGHT* to `700` will certainly not hurt, as you can achieve this without any changes in-game as well, the *OVERVIEW_MAX_HEIGHT* might be a matter for discussion.

Scrolling Speed

If one uses such increased zoom levels, one will notice very quickly that even at maximum scroll speed, the scroll is rather slow. This can be changed by turning up the parameters *FAST_MAX_SCROLL_SPEED* and *MAX_SCROLL_SPEED* in the RTS_CFG.h, e.g. to 20. This is not only useful when zoomed in, but also at higher resolutions, e.g. when playing on full HD. The scrolling always feels a bit slow otherwise.

Sound Settings

Stutter

The sound settings may be of some concern, because Armada causes problems with Windows XP and 2000. The unit messages and notifications sound choppy. So if the following tricks shown in Sound Stutters on XP or Windows 2000 don't work and the sound still sounds terrible, just set the speech volume to 0. You are not required to hear that, if it sounds crappy anyway.

Removing Menu Music

The menu music is another problem. It does not follow the volume settings at all but plays at full volume at all times. See Known Problems on the matter.

Removing Intro Video

After a while the intro cinematic can become kind of tiresome. You can get rid of it simply by renaming it's video file *animations/STIntro.bik*. E.g. renaming it to STIntro.bik.bak makes the game simply not load it any more. It will not crash but ignore the fact, that the file is missing.

Config Files

ART_CFG.h

This one of the two most important configuration files, that control the Armada behavior with settings that are not reachable from in-game settings. Here is an overview of the most interesting config variables:

Setting	Effect	Default Value
CINERACTIVE_FAR_CLIPPING_PLANE	Maximum distance after which objects in the cinematics window are no longer rendered.	1000

Setting	Effect	Default Value
CINEMATIC_FAR_CLIPPING_PLANE	Maximum distance after which objects are no longer rendered in cinematic sequences (in single-player). Do not confuse this with the cinematics window, that is always available.	300
FAR_CLIPPING_PLANE	Maximum distance after which objects are not rendered any more.	1000
GRID_FAR_CLIP_PLANE	Maximum distance after which the grid is no longer rendered.	10000
STAR_FAR_CLIP_PLANE	Maximum distance after which also the background stars are no longer rendered.	80000

RTS_CFG.h

This file uses the *ART_CFG.h* (include directive), so everything set in ART_CFG.h can be overridden here as well. It controls more of the technical aspects. Be careful with some of the values here, that actually affect the game rules (e.g. how much something costs or where a unit can go). If these parameters are not set to the same values for all involved players in multi-player, the game *will* go de-sync rather early on (as units or yards do things they would normally not be possible for some of the players).

Setting	Effect	Default Value
DEBUG_DRAW	If set to 1, the game will show the objects names and types.	0
DEBUG_SHOW_BOUNDING_SQUARE	If set to 1, the game will show some rectangles that represent the positions of objects in the upper left corner.	0
DEBUG_SHOW_OBJECT_BOUNDING_BOX	If set to 1, the game will show boxes around objects, that represent their boundaries.	0
DEBUG_SHOW_OBJECT_BOUNDING_SPHERE	If set to 1, the game will show a circle representing the spherical boundaries of each object.	0
DECONSTRUCT_PERCENT_TIME	This value defines how fast a unit is deconstructed in relation to its construction time. The value range is 0 to 1 (=100%)). **This may break the sync for network matches if not all players have the very same setting.**	0.3
EASY_AI_CLOAK_PERCENT	How likely is it, that the easy AI cloaks its ships before going on an incursion. Value range is 0 to 100 (100%).	25
EASY_DAMAGE	Damage multiplier for the easy AI in single-player. Can be an arbitrary value, with *1* representing 100% or normal values.	0.5
FAST_MAX_SCROLL_SPEED	How fast does the game scroll at most?	5
FRAMERATE_DISPLAY	If set to 1 then FPS are displayed in the upper left corner.	0

Setting	Effect	Default Value
HARD_AI_CLOAK_PERCENT	How likely is it, that the hard AI cloaks its ships before going on an incursion. Value range is 0 to 100 (100%).	75
HARD_AI_COST_AND_SPEED_HANDICAP	Defines the hard AIs advantage in terms of build time and resource cost. This value can be arbitrary with 1 defining 100% or normal cost. **This may break the sync for network matches if not all players have the very same setting.**	0.4
HARD_DAMAGE	Damage multiplier for the hard AI in single-player. Can be an arbitrary value, with *1* representing 100% or normal values.	2
MAP_EDGE_BUFFER	Defines the width of the border, that cannot be entered. It does not change the overall size of the map. It only sets the border in each direction of the map.	100
MAX_SCROLL_SPEED	How fast does the game scroll at most if you use only one way of scrolling.	10
MEDIUM_AI_CLOAK_PERCENT	How likely is it, that the medium AI cloaks its ships before going on an incursion. Value range is 0 to 100 (100%).	50
MEDIUM_AI_COST_AND_SPEED_HANDICAP	Defines the medium AIs advantage in terms of build time and resource cost. This value can be arbitrary with 1 defining 100% or normal cost. **This may break the sync for network matches if not all players have the very same setting.**	0.8
OVERVIEW_INIT_HEIGHT	Defines the altitude of the camera when you enter the match or press h.	450
OVERVIEW_INIT_ROTATION	Defines the turning angle of the camera when entering a match or pressing h. The higher the value, the more the map is turned anti-clock-wise or the camera clockwise. Values are in radiant, e.g. 180 ° = π. So a value of $\approx$ 6.28 would have no effect as the camera is turned entirely for one time.	0
OVERVIEW_MAX_HEIGHT	Maximum altitude you can reach with the - key on your numblock.	700
OVERVIEW_MIN_HEIGHT	Minimum altitude you can reach with the + key on your numblock.	10
OVERVIEW_PARABOLA_FOCUS	Reference point on the parabola, controlling the perspective angle of the camera.	200
SCROLL_BORDER_WIDTH	Distance of the mouse pointer to the screen border from which on scrolling begins, measured from the pointer tip.	2
SCROLL_COEFFICIENT	Multiplier for the scroll speed. Controls the overall scrolling speed. Goes for keyboard and mouse scroll.	90000

Setting	Effect	Default Value
STATION_PLACEMENT_GRID_SIZE	Grid distance of build blocking depiction. The bigger the value, the more rough the grid gets. Default is 50, representing half of the size of the general map grid. 25 is the same granularity as the Fog of War uses. **Do not set this to very low values (e.g. 1).** It will impact performance massively, when setting a new building.	50
TRANSPORTER_MAX	Maximum size of the beam-in boarding party.	5
TRANSPORTER_RANGE	Maximum distance for beam-ins.	500

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