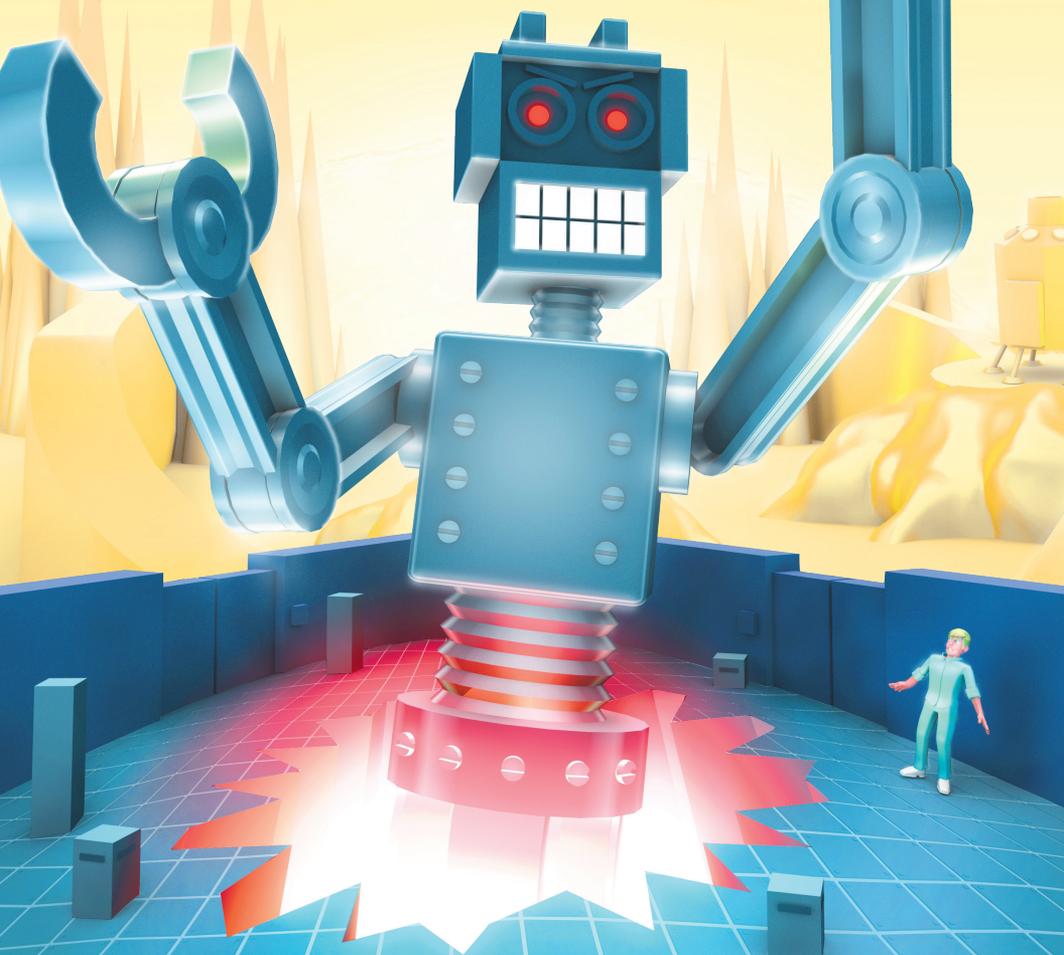


ATTACK OF THE PETSCII ROBOTS



USER MANUAL – C128 EDITION

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO ATTACK OF THE PESCII ROBOTS FOR COMMODORE 128.....	3
USING A SUPER NINTENDO CONTROLLER.....	5
C128 DUAL MONITOR MODE.....	6
"HACKING THE CONNECTOR.....	7
CREDITS.....	7
HOW TO PLAY.....	8
TROUBLE SHOOTING.....	9
SEARCHING FOR ITEMS.....	10
WEAPONS AND ITEMS.....	11
ENEMY ROBOTS.....	13
HOW TO GET AROUND.....	14
MOVING ITEMS AROUND.....	15
DEFAULT KEYBOARD LAYOUT.....	16
TIPS & TRICKS.....	18
MAPS & HINTS.....	19



ATTACK OF THE PESCII ROBOTS

WELCOME TO ATTACK OF THE PESCII ROBOTS FOR COMMODORE 128

After successfully launching Pescii Robots on the Commodore PET, C64, VIC-20, Apple II, and Atari, several skilled programmers contacted me about possible ports to other platforms. One of those people was Scott Robison. He was interested in porting the game to the C128. I spent a few hours on the phone talking to him about it. Initially, I was skeptical. Primarily because he wanted to make the game run on the 80-column display. I didn't feel the game would be fast enough, or even look as good as what the C64 version already had.

Scott worked on the 80-column version for a few days and eventually conceded that I was probably right and the game would be inferior, and thus, probably pointless to go that route. But, as we brainstormed ideas for the 128 version, we both started to become excited about the project when we realized some of the possibilities the 128K of RAM opened up for us.

We discussed taking the game away from character graphics to a full bit-mapped screen. The C64 just didn't have enough RAM to store the bit-mapped graphics. But even if it did, this would normally be unthinkable for the screen area it takes up and how fast it is expected to move. But, the Apple II coders had managed to make it work on that platform using some interesting optimizations. And so following their lead, we set out to convert the game from character graphics to bit-mapped. And, if you compare the screenshot below of the C64 version compared to the C128 version, you can see it was worth it!



C64 version

C128 version

The second most exciting thing we discussed was using the 80-column screen as a live map. That way you could see where you are on the map with a blinking dot. And it would technically be a dual-monitor game for the C128. This involved some rather fancy trickery to be able to display the map in full color, but it works! And it's amazing

Some other features of the 128 that are used include the MMU for some faster memory copying to the screen, the fast “burst mode” of the disk drive, the extra space of a 1571 floppy disk, full use of the keyboard for custom key controls, and the ability to auto-boot on reset or power on. We’re actually using all 128K of the C128’s RAM. So, you are truly experiencing a game that was designed for your C128. This is the game us 128 users deserved back in 1986, but never got. Better late than never, I suppose!

David Murray

SCOTT’S NOTES

I first discovered “retrocomputing” back in 1982 when my school in rural north east Texas bought three Commodore PETs with tape drives, a dual floppy drive and a printer. I was the only student in the school who expressed an interest in them for several years until we finally had a computer class for my senior year. I bought a Commodore 64 for myself in high school, and later I bought a Commodore 128D for college. I loved those computers for the reasons so many of us did. They were magical, and by reading the manuals, magazines, and books we could teach ourselves how to be magicians. I’ve been a professional software engineer for over 30 years now, but part of me still misses the good old days when you could fully understand the architecture of the computer on your desk without 42 layers of abstraction between you and the hardware.

After high school I moved to Utah to attend college, and I’ve been here ever since. My kids are grown, my wife and I are empty nesters, and I’m a bit more gray than I used to be. Despite that, inside I am still the kid who started using 8 bit Commodore PETs in 1982 in junior high.

By day I work for a Fortune 500 company writing software as a government contractor. I also teach junior high students how to program in Python at a local school a few days a week. By night I work on side projects. When The 8-Bit Guy announced the Atari port of PETSII Robots and didn’t show a Commodore 128 port of the game in progress I reached out to him to see if there was any interest. My idea was a simple VDC based port that would run in 2 MHz mode. What he envisioned was a lot more ambitious and far better than what I would have come up with left to my own devices!

It has been a blast working on this game. I hope you enjoy playing it as much as I enjoyed working on it! You can find me on Facebook and Twitter as [@CasaDeRobison](#), or via email at scott@casaderobison.com.

Scott Robison

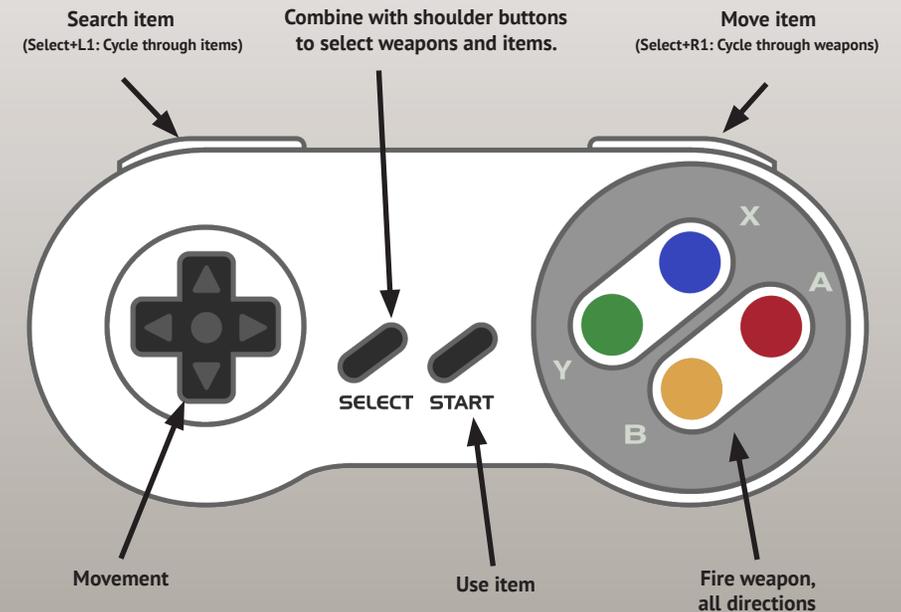


USING A SUPER NINTENDO CONTROLLER

With the user port adapter, you can connect a single SNES (Super Nintendo Entertainment System) controller, or a compatible aftermarket controller, which are easily available online. To use the controller, load the game like normal, but in the main menu, select **CONTROLS** until it says “**SNES PAD.**” The user port adapter is supported on the C128, C64, PET, Plus/4, and VIC-20 versions of the game.

The sound output port on the adapter does not do anything on the C128, it is only for PET computers. Leave the jumper in the default configuration as well.

The SNES controller only works during game play. You will still need to use the keyboard when the **GAME OVER** screen appears, as well as in the main menu. Also, if you wish to pause or exit in the middle of a game, you will still need to press **RUN/STOP** on the keyboard.

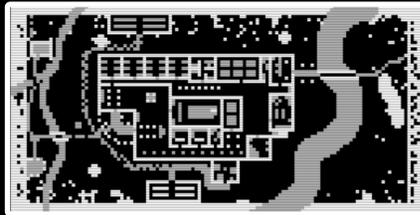


C128 DUAL MONITOR MODE

All Commodore 128s have the ability to use dual monitors, although it was virtually never used by most people. The regular game is displayed on the 40-column screen, which is the regular screen used with composite or LCA video. The map is displayed on the 80 column screen, which relies on the RGBI video output on the back of the C128.



RGBI Color Map



Composite Grayscale Map

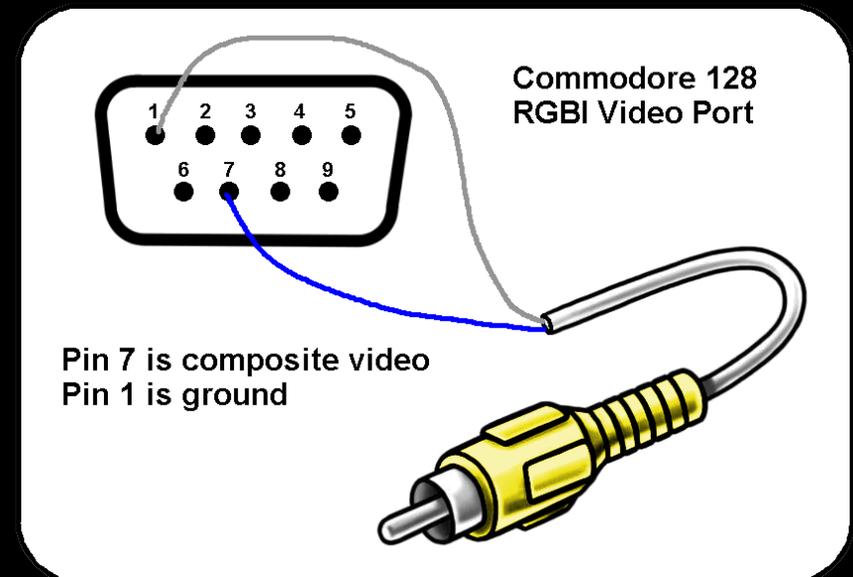
Some monitors, such as the Commodore 1084, will connect to both ports allowing you to use a switch on the front of the monitor to select which display you want to see. This method will also work fine for viewing the map by simply toggling the switch on the monitor.

Alternatively, you can connect a separate RGBI monitor to your C128 and use it as a second monitor to see the map. Also any IBM CGA compatible monitor should work, as well as most Tandy or EGA monitors that have a 9-pin connector.



“HACKING” THE CONNECTOR

And for those that don't have access to an RGBI monitor, there is yet another option available. There is a composite output available on the RGBI port, pin 7. The catch is, you'll need to build or purchase a custom cable. The second catch is that the output is monochrome, giving you black, white, and a single shade of gray (shown on page 6). Since the map is very hard to view like this, we've added a feature in the game just for this. Press the TAB key on your keyboard to alternate between color and monochrome maps.



CREDITS

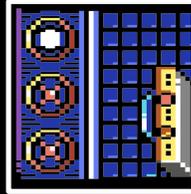
- David Murray Game design, assembly coding, artwork
- Scott Robison C128 development, assembly coding
- Piotr Radecki Primary pixel art for tile graphics
- Jim Wright Intro screen pixel art
- Noelle Aman Music
- Anders Enger Jensen Box, manual and label design
- Brendan Carmody Graphics for box art and manual
- Frederic Bezies Beta tester

HOW TO PLAY

Sometime in the future, robots attempt to take over human settlements on various planets. Your goal is to infiltrate these settlements and destroy all of the robots. To do this, you'll need to locate weapons and other tools.

WHEN CAN YOU EXIT THE LEVEL?

There is a transporter room in every settlement. However, to prevent unauthorized robots from leaving the settlements, the transporter systems have been remotely programmed not to activate until all robots have been destroyed. Once you have destroyed all robots, you will see the transporter pad activate, then you can step onto it to complete the level.



BRAINS OR BRAWNS?

At first glance, Attack of the PETSCII Robots might look like an action shooter game. However, it's really not. Think of it more of a strategy and exploration game.



While you are given weapons to fight with, you will never win if you try to fight the robots head on in battle. The way to victory is by examining each robot situation as a strategy. In most cases there will be a way to defeat every robot without engaging with them in a head on battle. The trick is learning to find all of the right tools, and learning how to use them. By following this manual, you will be properly prepared.

TROUBLESHOOTING

• JOYSTICK NOT WORKING

Petscii Robots doesn't actually support a standard Commodore joystick as there aren't enough buttons. You'll have to either use the keyboard, or use an SNES controller with the provided user-port adapter.

• CURSOR KEYS WON'T WORK ON EMULATOR

Many emulators default to having a joystick emulated on the PC's cursor keys. However, PETSCII Robots doesn't support a standard Commodore joystick. If you simply disable joystick emulation, the cursor keys should work for playing the game.

• GAME IS SLOW TO LOAD ON REAL C128

If you are using a real 1571 or 1581, you may have a disk drive cable that doesn't have the proper wiring for burst mode. It will still work, but will load more slowly. If you are using a drive emulator such as an SD-2-IEC, these are known not to support burst mode, so will also load slowly.

• GAME IS SLOW TO LOAD ON EMULATOR

Since PETSCII Robots doesn't use any enhanced disk drive routines or copy protection, the simplest solution is to disable "True Drive Emulation." In most cases this will allow the game to load and start very quickly.

• TRANSPORTER WON'T ACTIVATE, BUT THERE ARE NO MORE ROBOTS!

Actually, there really is one or more robots you just haven't found yet. Many times during testing I even wondered if there was a bug in the code, so I had to break into a machine language monitor and examine the RAM to find the robot, but it was always there in every single case. I eventually learned to trust the game! Using the on-screen map may help locate the missing robot, be sure to press SHIFT-TAB to toggle them on.

• I BLEW UP A BRIDGE IN THE GAME AND CAN'T GET ACROSS!

This is not a bug, it is by design. You have to be careful around bridges, or you can forfeit the game if you blow it up. Just press Run/Stop and abort the game.

SEARCHING FOR ITEMS

One of the first things you'll need to do once you start playing is to search for items. To do this, walk up to the object you wish to search and use the search function on your keyboard or controller. When you do this, a cursor will appear over your character. At this point, it is waiting for you to select a direction (up, down, left, or right) to search.

Some objects are not searchable. If you attempt to search a wall or the floor, for example, it will immediately respond with a message "nothing found here." If you search an item that is considered searchable, you will see a delay and a progress indicator in the information box showing that a search is in progress, followed by a message stating what, if anything, was found there.

These are the types of things you can search. Most items are hidden inside of crates, therefore crates should always be searched. Once a crate is searched, it will appear with the lid off, thus indicating to you that you've already searched it.

Some items are more than one tile in size, such as beds, desks, and air conditioners. It is not necessary to search every tile. If you search one tile of that item it will find the hidden object, regardless of which part of it you search first.



LOCKER



FILE CABINETS



SINK



DESKS AND BENCHES



LANDER



BED



POWER
TRANSFORMER



AIR CONDITIONER

WEAPONS AND ITEMS

Once you've started finding weapons and items, it is probably a good idea to learn what each one does.

PISTOL One of two weapons available. This is the most abundant one you will find around the maps, with the most ammo. It does exactly 1 point of damage to anything you shoot. Thus, it takes 10 shots to kill a hoverbot, the weakest of robots. When using this weapon, it is best to seek cover and fire behind an object that will separate you from the robot. For example, shooting over a desk, or through a window. The pistol will also set off canisters if you shoot one, thus making a powerful explosion with a single shot.



PLASMA GUN This is the more powerful of your two weapons available. It creates 11 points of damage and a blast 5 tiles wide. Thus it will damage your target and anything near it as well. Be careful with this weapon as it is easy to kill yourself if you are too close to what you are shooting. It's probably best to conserve your ammo with this weapon for the Rollerbots and Evilbots.



EMP The Electro-Magnetic-Pulse generator will force any robots within your viewable area to reboot, thus causing them to freeze for several seconds. During this time you can make your escape, or attack the robot. Use these sparingly and save them for the hard to kill robots. Also, if you use an EMP while a hoverbot is hovering over water, it will fall into the water and short-circuit. Thus, the EMP can be used to kill a hoverbot by itself when used correctly.



TIME BOMB When you "use" the time bomb, a cursor will appear over your character indicating it is waiting for a direction to be selected. Once you pick a direction, you will see the bomb next to you. It is best to run at this point. Within a few seconds the bomb will explode and create a blast 5 tiles wide. The blast will inflict 11 points of damage on anything it contacts. This can be used on robots that are generally staying in one place, or it can be used in cases where you need to blow up something blocking your path, or even set off a chain reaction of canisters.



Pro tip: You may use more than one time-bomb at a time. You can place them on different tiles, or on top of each other. It is possible to deploy up to 4 at once, but you'd better be quick!

MAGNET The magnet is deployed much like the time-bomb.

However, you need to position it somewhere you expect a robot to roll over it. If you are in direct contact with a robot, you can also place it directly on the robot. Once it attaches to the robot, it causes their brain to go haywire. They will move in random directions for about 15 seconds.

During this time, they are vulnerable to attack, although they can be unpredictable and thus hard to know where to shoot.



If you placed the magnet in the wrong place, you can simply walk over it to pick it back up again. If you leave the Magnet on the ground for too long, it will disappear. Tip - A robot will shake off the magnet in about 15 seconds. But if you get them with another magnet while they are already incapacitated, they will never recover and thus remain haywire indefinitely.

You can only deploy one magnet at a time, as in, there can only be one magnet on the floor at a time. But several can be "in use" at the same time. The magnet is probably the most powerful tool available to you, when used correctly. However, there aren't very many located on each map.

MEDKIT The Medical Kit can be used to heal your injuries.

When you "use" the medkit, it will heal all 12 health points assuming you have that much available in your medkit supplies. If not, it will heal as much as you have available. If you have more than enough, the remainder of the medkit will remain in inventory for future use.



CANISTER These chemical canisters are located all around the map. You can move them around.

They are safe to touch. But, they will explode if you shoot them. They will also explode if they are nearby another exploding object, or if they are shot by the Rollerbot. These can be strategically placed where you need them, and thus used like a weapon. Once a canister explodes, it will leave a mangled, exploded canister on the map. You can't do anything with it, but you can move it around and use it to block pathways.



KEY CARDS You will notice some doors are locked, and a symbol will be displayed next to the door

such as a heart, spade, or star. You will need to find the appropriate key card to open these doors. If you have a keycard, it will appear on the right side of the screen under "KEYS:"



ENEMY ROBOTS

Obviously one of the main goals is to destroy all of the robots. But first it probably helps to learn a little bit about them.

HOVERBOT This is the most docile of the robots as it will generally not attack you unless you attack it first. Well, this is at least the case when playing in easy and normal modes. Thus it is usually best to leave them alone until you are ready to attack them. And when you are ready, you should have a strategy formed as to how to do so without them attacking you back. (When playing in hard mode, Hoverbots attack automatically.)



Hoverbot can only attack at close range. It attacks with an electric shock. It causes one point of damage every time it shocks you. However, this can add up quickly especially if there are multiple Hoverbots attacking you.

Hoverbot has a health of 10 points, thus it takes 10 shots from the pistol, or 1 large explosion to kill it.

ROLLERBOT This is a bit more powerful robot, which rolls around on a single large ball. Unlike Hoverbot, it cannot float over water or other objects. However, it doesn't need to as it carries a projectile weapon, which causes 1 point of damage. It will not shoot at you unless it is aligned with you on the X or Y axis where it can take a direct shot. So keep this in mind when battling Rollerbot. Also keep in mind how you might use canisters to your advantage by placing them in the path of his weapon's fire.



Rollerbot has a health of 20 points, and thus will take 20 shots from the pistol or two large explosions to kill.

EVILBOT

This is the most powerful robot you will encounter. He shreds you apart with his spinning arms. He may seem disadvantaged compared to the other robots because he cannot hover and he has no projectile weapon. However, what makes him so dangerous is his attack, which causes 6 points of damage on contact. So, taking two hits from Evilbot will kill you. This can happen very quickly. Evilbot will chase you the moment you release him from whatever room he is hiding in. He's fast too.



Evilbot also has very thick armor. He has 75 health points and thus could take over 7 explosions to kill him.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Besides walking, there are 4 other ways to get around the map.

TRANSPORTER It's easy enough to use, you just step onto it and wait a second or two. However, not all transporters work the same. Some are always active, and you will see this because they will have a flashing circle in the middle. If they are inactive, they will show a static, non blinking dot.



ACTIVE:

INACTIVE:

Some transporters will just transport you somewhere else on the map. Usually, there will be a pad nearby to transport you back. However, the final transporter will only activate when all robots have been destroyed. Stepping on this will transport you away from the map, thus meaning you have finished the map.

AUTOMATED RAFT You will sometimes find a dock at the edge of the water and wonder how you are supposed to leave the island. If you wait there long enough, an automated raft will show up. You can walk onto it, then it will transport you to another island.



ELEVATOR Some maps will have an elevator that takes you to another floor of a building. Buildings with elevators typically have between 2 and 5 floors. When you walk into the elevator, wait for the door to close. Then a panel will appear in your information screen showing how many levels. You can press left or right to move between levels, then press down to open the elevator door. If you stand there long enough, the door will close again. The current floor is usually marked on the wall next to the elevator.



BRIDGE Using the bridge is fairly obvious, as in, you just walk across it. However, one important thing to consider is that it is that wooden bridges are easily damaged. If you set off an explosion on or near the bridge, you may destroy parts of it, thus making your path inaccessible and thus forfeiting the map. Concrete bridges are safe to use any weapons on.



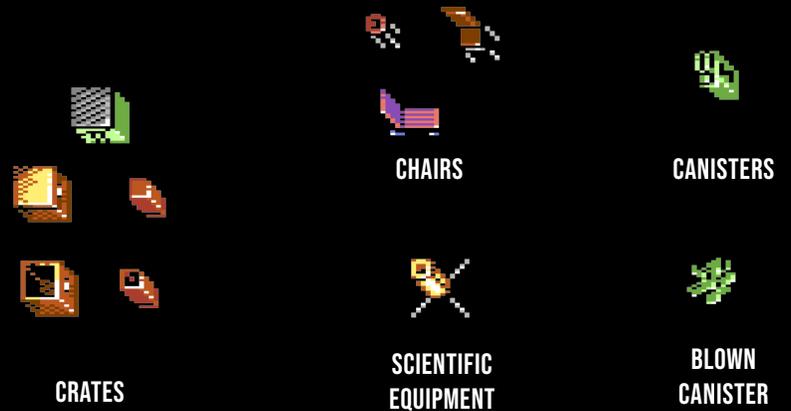
MOVING ITEMS AROUND

These are the objects that can be moved around. This is accomplished by pressing the **MOVE** button, after which a cursor will appear over your character waiting for a direction. This allows you to select which object to move. If the object is movable, it will highlight the object, waiting for you to then select a direction to move the object. You can move it any direction except towards you. There is no way to pull an object.

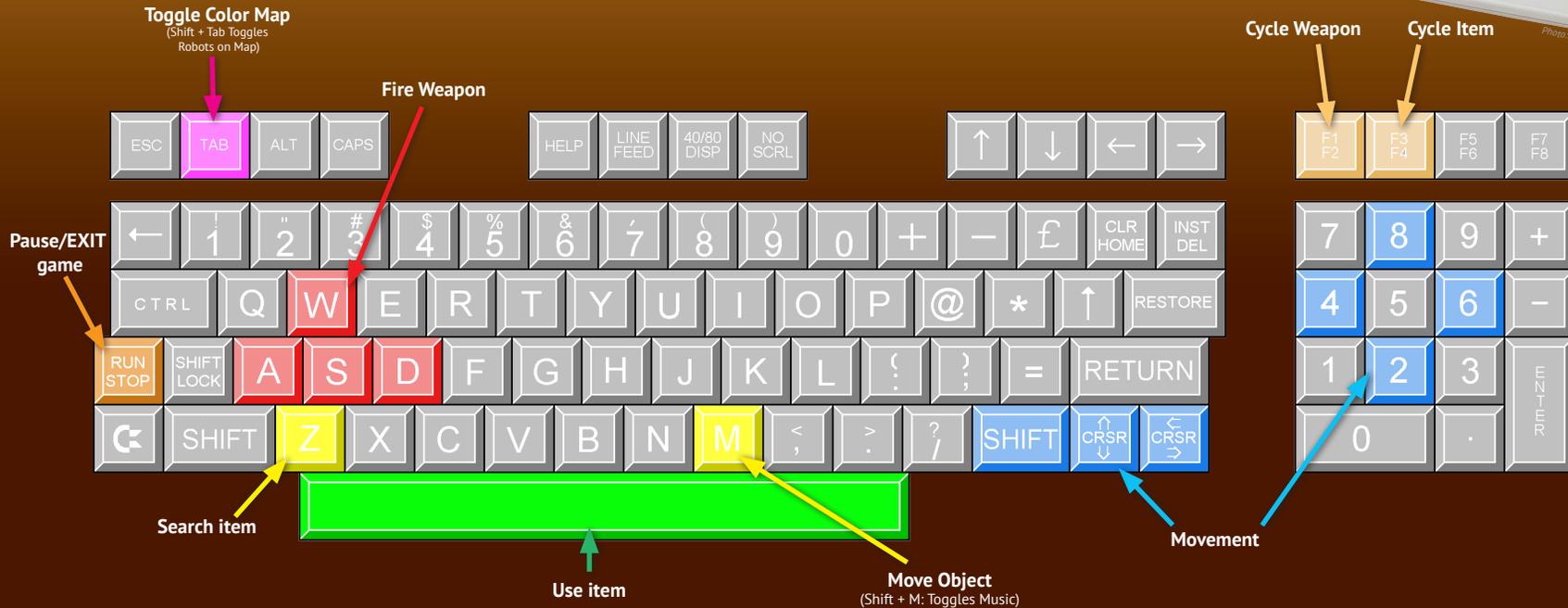
Moving objects can play an important role in solving problems in the game. There are many reasons you might want to move an object:

- **Moving a canister to a place where the explosion would work in your favor.**
- **Blocking a robot from leaving some place when you intend to attack him, with a time-bomb for example.**
- **Moving an object to gain access to something that needs to be searched for weapons.**
- **Using objects to alter the path of a robot, for example, into a trash compactor.**

Typically, most objects can only be moved around inside buildings.. You cannot move objects around outside of a building.



DEFAULT KEYBOARD LAYOUT

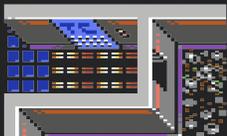


Note that cursor keys are primarily supported for use in emulators. It isn't recommended to play the game using those on real hardware. You should use the number pad, your own custom key configuration, or the SNES adapter.

TIPS & TRICKS

As you play, you will find that Attack of the PETSCII Robots is a very complex game. There are often many different ways to solve problems. But here are a few hints:

USEFUL HINTS

- * Hoverbots over water are susceptible to an EMP blast because they will fall into the water and short-circuit. 
- * You can shoot through windows. This often gives you additional safety if attacking a robot on the other side. You may even be able to shoot canisters through a window. 
- * The trash compactor will kill anything that walks inside of it, including the player. However, there are various ways to manipulate items in order to trick robots into walking into the trash compactor to their death. Also, if you use the magnet on a robot near the trash compactor, you may be able to herd the crazed robot into the compactor. 
- * You should try to avoid direct confrontations with the robots. In every situation there is an alternative to a shootout. Try to find these ways. Also don't forget to use your EMP, magnets, and time-bombs where appropriate.

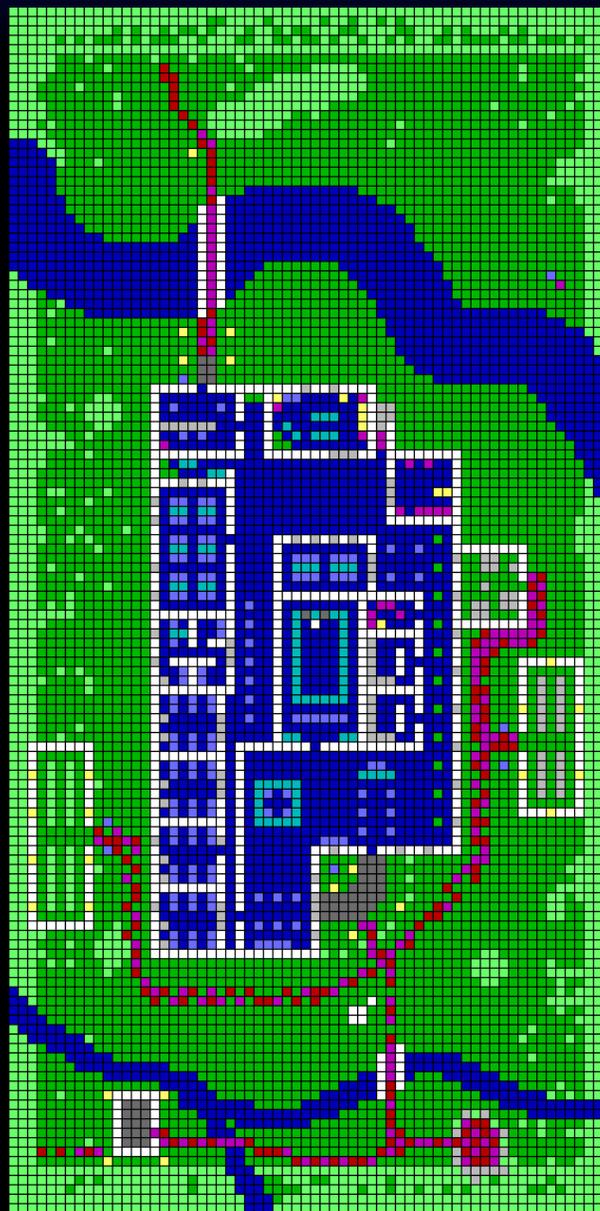
commodore



POWER

VIDEO MONITOR
MODEL 1702

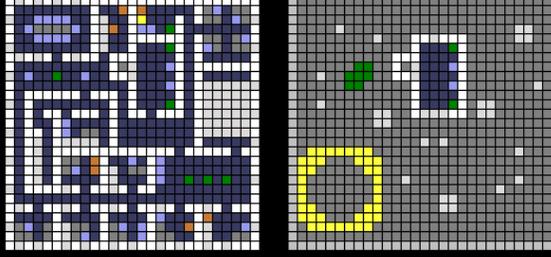
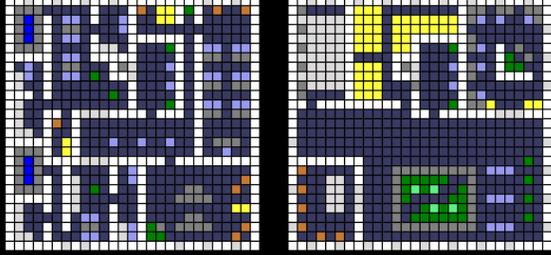
MAPS AND HINTS



01 RESEARCH LAB

- Don't forget to search your lander.
- Find the first key in the big desk in the main lobby.
- There's a surprise crate in the wilderness on the south-east side of the river
- By moving items around the trash compactor, it is possible to lure the Evilbot to his death.

02 HEADQUARTERS



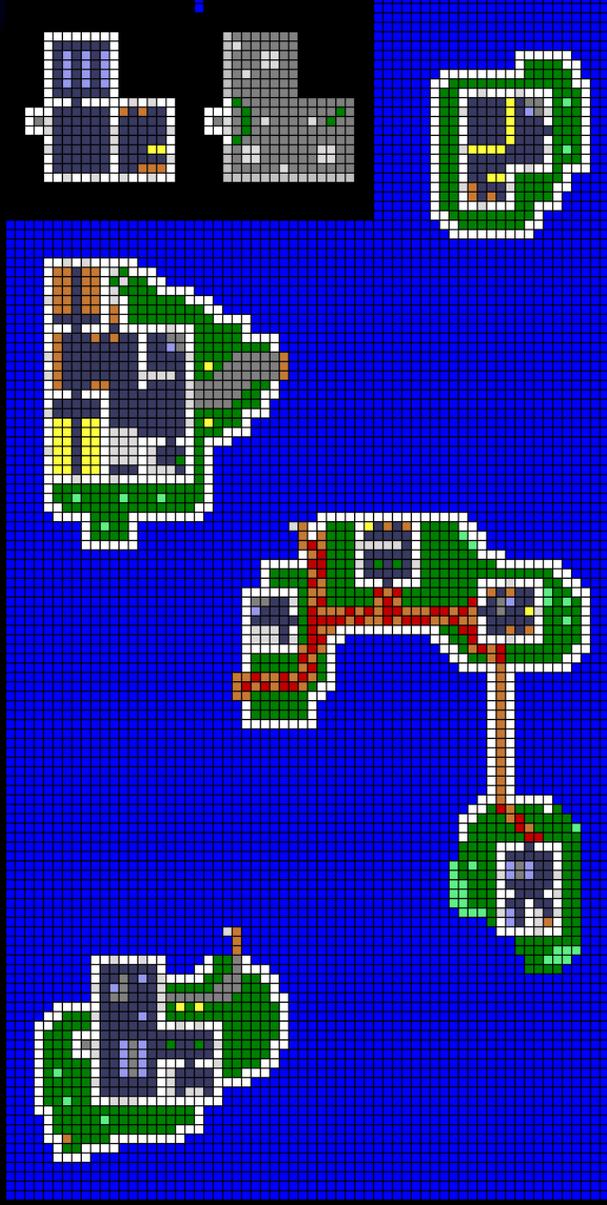
- Find the first key in the guard shack at the south-west corner of the map
- It's possible to position the canisters around the entrance to the transporter room to trap and destroy the Evilbot

03 THE VILLAGE



- There are two Evilbots guarding a fuel canister building. You can shoot the canisters through the window to severely damage them.
- There is a Rollerbot guarding the storage building in the center of the map. If you walk directly above the building, he will shoot the canisters himself, causing his own death.
- On the 2nd floor of the main building, there is a plant blocking your path behind the elevator. You can blow that plant up with a time bomb or the nearby canister. In the crate behind it, you'll find a Plasma Gun.

04 THE ISLANDS



- The first key is in the L-Shaped desk in the main building lobby
- There is an automated raft that will come to the dock every 10 seconds. Step on the raft and it will take you to the next island.
- Move the crate out of the way of the trash compactor and the Rollerbot will roll right into it on his own. You may need to move the crate back to trap him there.
- The two Hoverbots on the roof are already in attack mode. There are many ways to defeat them. One easy way is to place a time bomb by the crates and then go back to the elevator before they explode.

05 DOWNTOWN



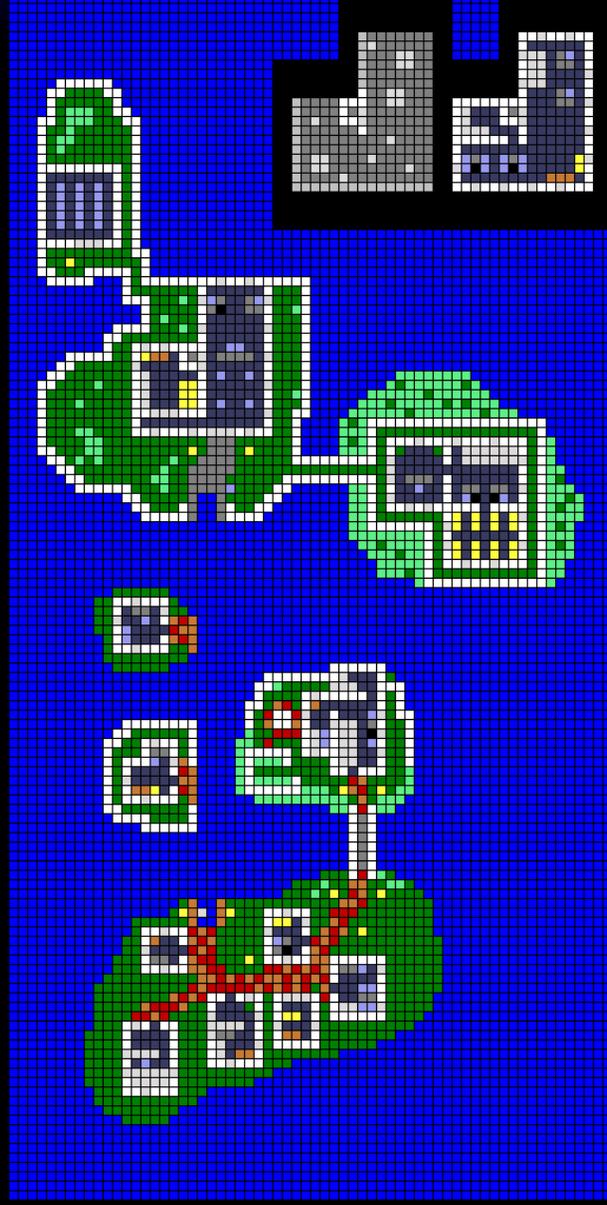
- Find your first key in the big desk of the main lobby on the building SouthWest of the main circle.
- In the same building, it is possible to move the crates in a way that the Rollerbot will actually kill the Hoverbot.
- Shoot the canisters through the window of the NorthWest storage building to kill or damage the Evilbot inside.
- On the second floor, there is room for one canister on each of the far sides of the server racks. It involves moving some things around to make it work. You can use this to destroy the Rollerbot.
- The Evilbot on the roof will typically be at the far side of the roof when you first exit the elevator. If you go immediately to the left, he will get himself stuck to the left of the elevator, giving you time to setup an attack. If you fail, just go back to level 3 for a moment, then back to the roof.
- There is a building full of water with 3 Hoverbots. It's possible to kill them all with one EMP by getting all 3 in view at the same time.

06 TT UNIVERSITY



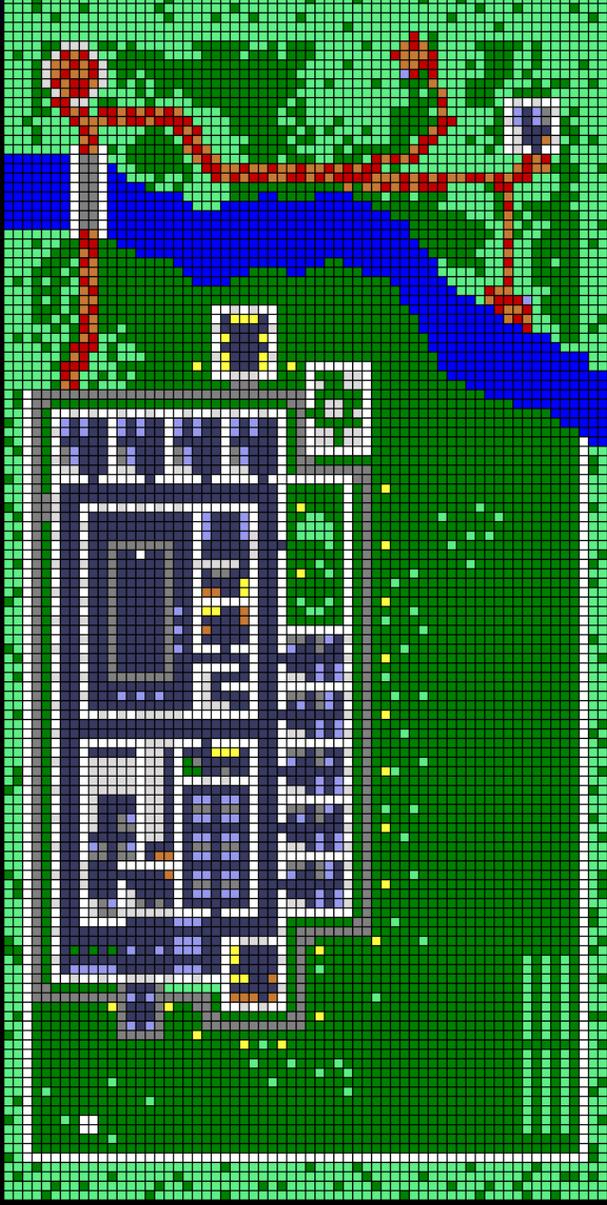
- Find your first key in the tiny building behind the forest at the SouthWest corner of the map.
- You can kill 2 Hoverbots instantly with the EMP if you time it right to wait for both to be over the swimming pool at the same time.
- Kill the Evilbot in the canister room by exiting the building and going around to the South window and shooting a canister. As the room explodes, keep moving along the wall (in safety) to get the Evilbot to follow you to more unexploded canisters.

07 MORE ISLANDS



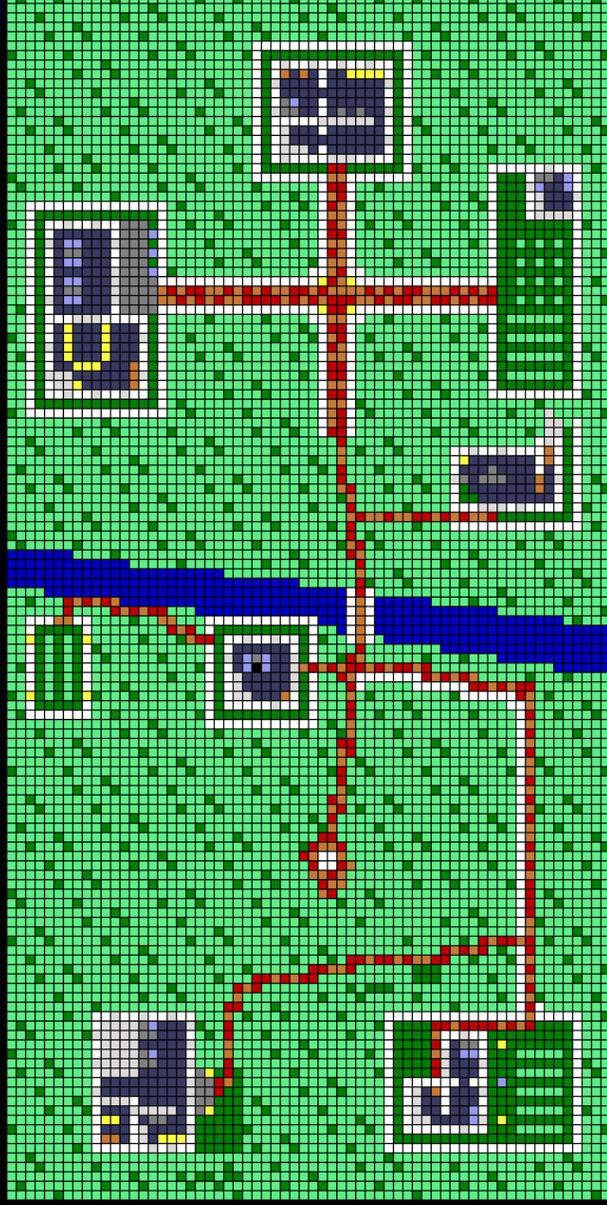
- Jump on and off the raft to get to the two smaller islands in the middle. You have to be quick.
- The two Hoverbots in the canister room in the South are already in "angry mode." But remember you can shoot through windows.

08 ROBOT HOTEL



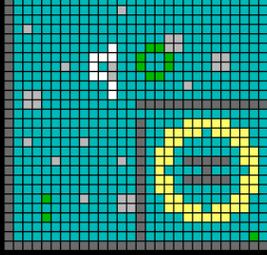
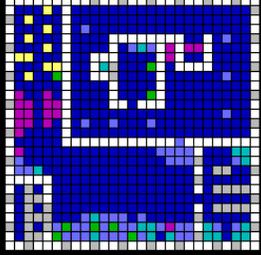
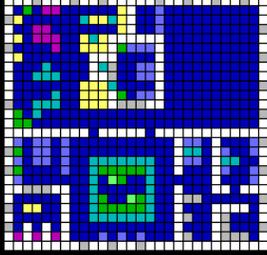
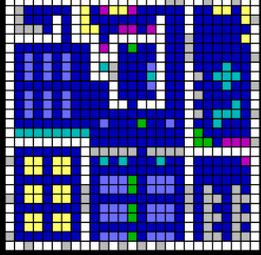
- One of the transporters is always active and will transport you to the little house at the SouthEast of the map. However, you'll have to walk back. There is a key in that little house you will need anyway.

09 FOREST MOON



- There is a small building to the south that contains a ridiculous number of robots. However, there is a trash compactor at the bottom. Use your EMP to freeze the robots as you walk by the door so they don't chase you. Then trick all of them to walk into the trash compactor.
- In the NorthWest building (with the transporter pads) there are two Rollerbots. It is possible to search all of desks and filing cabinets for items you will need by simply standing behind the filing cabinets as they will shield you from fire.

10 DEATH TOWER



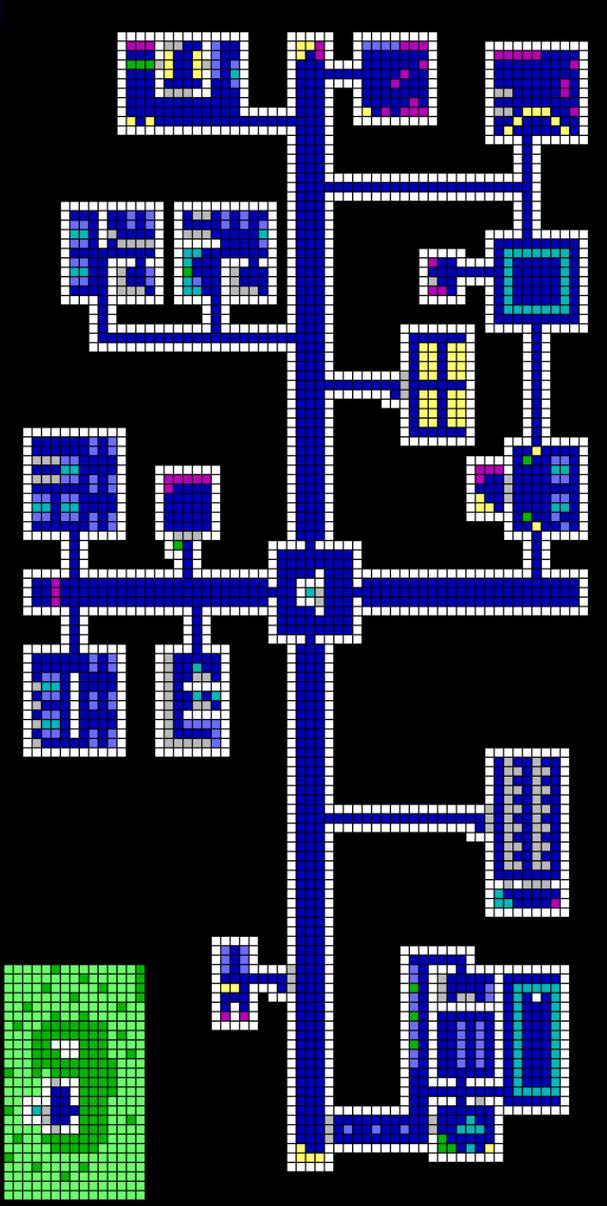
- On level 2, you should let the Evilbot chase you into the upper room filled with canisters, use an EMP or magnet on the Evilbot, then detonate the canisters as you run.
- On level 3, drop a bomb next to the two evilbots and run to the top. Wait for them to chase you, then have them circle around the elevator and you can draw both of them into the trash compactor.

11 RIVER DEATH



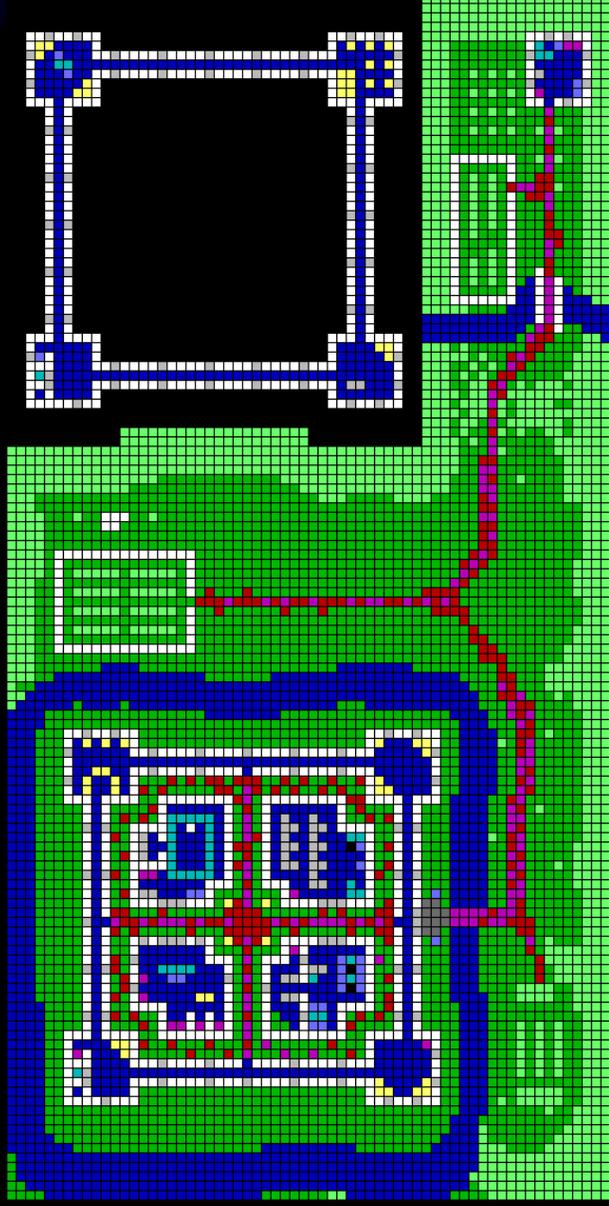
- You'll have to take the raft between buildings to complete the level. Beware there are things waiting to kill you. Many of these can be eliminated before you get on the raft. The rest can be eliminated by jumping off into the alleyways before you reach the end.

12 BUNKER



- Lay the magnet in front of the door for the evilbot on the surface. You should probably go ahead and use two of them so he won't try to kill you when you come back up the elevator.
- There is a room full of canisters; you can draw an Evilbot or two into it, use a magnet or EMP, then detonate them as you leave.
- In the room with the rollerbot, you can use the "science equipment" as a shield and keep pushing it in front of you until you block him.

13 CASTLE ROBOT



- The Evilbot on the second floor can be lured into the room with the canisters, followed by an EMP or magnet.



THE
8-Bit Guy

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