

**PROPOSAL FOR THE
KONIX
ARCADE MACHINE**

**A SAILING SIMULATION
BY OXFORD DIGITAL ENTERPRISES**

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Oxford Digital Enterprises wish to present a basic proposal for a sailing simulation written especially for the new Konix arcade machine. We foresee that many of the capabilities of this machine will allow us to create a technically advanced, yet simple and exciting game, with features which we could not contemplate on any home computer. We would be most enthusiastic if a development opportunity was granted to our team.

Background

Oxford Digital Enterprises Ltd. was formed in late 1984 as a high-level software development house by Dr. David Pringle. The company currently employs five full-time programmers and four free-lance artists and games designers. ODE's philosophy has always been to create a small number of products each year, and to concentrate on quality rather than on quantity.

The team's most notable commercial successes have been *Macbeth*, a series of graphic adventures which won two major software awards; *Trivial Pursuit*, a conversion of the board game which has won international acclaim; and *Hunt for Red October*, a submarine simulation which has been the largest selling 16-bit title ever in Germany and was a CES showcase award winner in Chicago in mid-1988. Overall the company has been responsible for over 750,000 software sales worldwide.

In 1988, Oxford Digital has been involved in developing two major strands of software innovation, which involve two products for release in early 1989. The vehicle for launching these products has been a newly formed publishing house, *ElectraWare*, which we jointly own with Entertainment International, a computer games marketing company. At this stage we would hope to release this game through *ElectraWare*.

SAILING

In early 1987, three of our programmers spent two months creating three versions of a sailing simulation for Activision. Although it was our shortest ever project, the end product was satisfying and rather well received. (See the enclosed reviews). In spite of the inevitable limitations which were imposed by the commercial time scale, a number of innovative ideas were presented. We would wish to build on these

substantially for our new simulation on the Konix machine. It should also be noted that we have retained worldwide rights to all aspects of the game.

There are very few competent sailing simulations on the market, and our simulation succeeded because the player's yacht was very easy to control and we presented precisely the sort of view that a yachtsman would have from the helm of his boat. This view was sufficiently realistic that some reviewers reported sea-sickness while playing the game! In our view the game had many areas which could be improved upon substantially, and we would concentrate on these for the Konix machine.

SAILING FOR THE KONIX

We propose a new game which allows the player to chose either a yachting competition simulation (akin to the Americas Cup and our previous game) or a more combat-oriented shoot-out using modern craft. Although much of the code would be similar for both games, we would need the extra memory available on floppy disc storage.

The yachting simulation would be based on a league table of nations, with the player choosing whichever country he wished to represent. The aim will be to reach the top of the league. Four locations for the matches will be available - the Isle of Wight, Freemantle, New Haven and Suhuru Bay in Japan. The player will be able to chose a standard design for his yacht, or, with the aid of a simple-to-use CAD/CAM screen, custom build his own yacht. This will allow the player to experiment with wings on the keel and other parameters. With constant weather reports, the player will also be able to make a choice of the best sails for the day's weather and the course, which will be randomly selected each day.

The game proper begins close to the starting line a minute before the starter's gun. The player will be vying for position with three other yachts. As the gun on the starter's boat reports with a puff of smoke the competition begins! The background scenery, which will reflect the chosen location, will not only move with the motion of the boat in the sea, but will size according to its distance from the player. All other objects: yachts, marker buoys and islands will be highly-detailed sized sprites. The technology for manipulating both the backgrounds and the sprite sizing has been developed at ODE over the past year, and although presently in 68000 code, will be translated to 8086 by Spring 1989. Much work has been done to optimise the way in which these are handled and so we expect to achieve high frame rates without much difficulty. The colour capabilities and speed of the Konix machine will also allow us to

present a quite detailed impression of the sea, which will vary according to the local weather conditions.

Although it will be tempting to add to the complexity of the control of the yacht, we believe that it is important that the control is simple for the player. Hence we intend to allow the player only to steer and set the spinnaker when necessary. Changing wind patterns, the presence of other yachts, and many marker buoys to round, should provide more than enough for the player to control. We intend to make specific use of the Konix "steering wheel" as the means of control, with the impulse feedback providing realistic "feel" as the yacht goes over waves. For players purchasing the optional chair, we have a means of yet again increasing the realism of the game. Full use will be made of the sound channels, both for accompanying music and, as importantly, for sea noise. A two player mode would allow players to take on a friend in a one to one competition, which could involve other boats as desired.

The combat version of this game would involve using precisely the same techniques for presenting backgrounds and other vessels. Instead of a yacht, the player would control an ultra-modern launch locked in a twenty-first century sea-borne dog fight with enemy craft. The major difference between the games will be the apparent speed of the combat version, and the ability to shoot at the opposition. A two player option will also be presented, which will allow earthly friends to become sea-borne enemies!

We foresee the above project as being a very substantial and exciting one. At this stage it would be our intention to commit an experienced programmer and graphic artist to the project full-time during 1989. We also envisage that we will need to commit another programmer to the project on a half-time basis during the year. It is a project which we are very keen to pursue.

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