

## **Table RaTS**

### **Game Description:**

This game is a hybrid of Real Time Strategy and Turn Based Strategy games. I envision it as a combination of Starcraft or Age of Empires and Advance Wars or Final Fantasy Tactics. Like a turn based strategy game, units will be able to move a set number of spaces around a tiled map. These units can perform a number of moves such as attacking or repairing other units. But unlike a traditional turn based strategy game, there are no well defined turns. Instead, each unit and building alternates from the "resting" state to the "active" state after a set amount of time. I have provided an animated gif of what some basic gameplay might look like at: <http://www.doc-ent.com/498m/Gameplay.gif>.

The game is set on an alien planet where technology is largely similar to that of the early 20th century on Earth. As such, the units in the game will resemble military units from the time period: infantrymen, cannons, primitive tanks, small planes, battleships, submarines, zeppelins, etc. There might also be some anachronistic or fantasy units in the game.

### **Basic Gameplay:**

There are always two overall objectives: Destroy all of your enemy's units, or capture your enemy's capital. Additional objectives for the single player campaign can possibly be introduced, such as surviving for a set number of turns, capturing a certain number of properties, or destroying a certain enemy unit.

There will be an assortment of different units in the game, each with unique strengths and weaknesses. These units may include Infantry, Cannons, or Zeppelins. It will be up to the player to decide what units he wants to build and what objectives he wants to focus on.

In general, each unit has a particular set damage that they do against each other unit in the game. This damage is then affected by factors such as upgrades, terrain, position, and the relative health of the unit to the enemy unit.

Resources will be acquired by receiving tribute every so often from property that the player controls. Resources are necessary to buy units, repair units, and research technology.

There will be an assortment of maps in the game, and each map will consist of a set of varied terrain. Some terrain will provide defensive advantages, while other terrain might be easier to move across. The aforementioned properties will be able to be captured by certain units and made into revenue makers.

### **Assessment:**

The main strength of the game will be the unique combination of turn based and real time strategy elements. If all turns out well, it should offer a combination of Starcraft's frantic late-game pace with the more intellectually stimulating Advance Wars or Final Fantasy Tactics.

Another strength of the game will be either the AI or the ability to play a real-life opponent online, depending on what direction the group decides to focus on. If we decide on the AI path, the AI should ideally prove to be a challenging opponent, especially when it is given advantages in the single player.

The planned level editor will be able to create custom maps, which will be a feature that should increase the game's longevity for the user.

### **Programming Environment:**

I would ideally like to explore using Microsoft's XNA Studio for developing this game. The turn based elements in the game make it suitable for potential use with a controller, so it may be in our best interests to consider porting this game to the Xbox 360, something easy to do in XNA.

In general, most programming languages will work for this game, because the graphics will be relatively simple. I've personally done a game that is similar in some ways in Java, and I've seen another one that was successfully done in Flash. The real limiting factor will probably be the complexity of the AI, although Advance Wars and even Famicom Wars were able to create relatively sophisticated computer opponents on the Game Boy Advance and NES, respectively.

## Graphics:

The game will be presented in a top-down 2D perspective. The background will consist of tiles of different terrain, while units and buildings will be sprites.

Each tile will have some slight animation and a few different varieties to keep the game looking fresh while it is being played. Units and buildings will also be animated while they are ready to have issues ordered to them.

The game will probably have to run at a fixed monitor resolution, so that everyone is able to see the same amount of screen. Some portion of the screen will have to be dedicated to User Interface information like unit names, tile types, etc. The graphics should be scaled so that for the default map size, the entire screen should be visible.

Overall, I expect the game to look somewhat similar to Advance Wars, although the style will likely be different.



Figure 1: Advance Wars

## Sound:

Ideally original background music should be used for this game. I already have some tools I can use for doing this. Because this is a war game, the music will probably be pretty up-tempo. The team will need to decide if they want to use lower quality MIDIs to keep the file size down, or use higher quality formats like MP3s for the background music.

Sound effects will probably be obtained from freeware sound effects websites.

## Functional Minimum:

- Basic, non-animated tiles, buildings and units.
- Functional map editor for creating new maps and editing existing maps that will be imported by the game.
- Game capable of loading maps.
- Ability to perform basic gameplay operations like creating, moving, and attacking other units.

## Low Target:

- Basic AI opponent.
- Basic unit balance.
- Unit path finding around terrain.
- More complicated game operations like repairing and transporting other units.
- Most of the User Interface implemented.
- The ability to play single matches.
- Some sound effects and background music.

## High Target:

- Network play.
- All of the user interface implemented.
- Competent AI opponent.
- Thoroughly tested unit and map balance.
- Different armies or commanders that bestow certain advantages and disadvantages on the player that chooses them.
- Some form of a well-balanced single player campaign.
  - This could involve implementing a form of scripting in the Level Editor.
- An interactive tutorial or learning campaign for learning how to play.
- A tutorial or help for creating maps.
- All sound effects and background music.
- Advanced effects like Fog of War.
- The ability to save and reload games.

## Other Possible Features

- 2D or 3D battle animation in the single player game.
- A central server for keeping track of stats and enabling easy match making.
- A feature to "record" a match by recording all of the mouse moves and keystrokes, so that the game can be easily viewed after it has concluded.
- Spectator modes.
- Random map generator.