About Abalone for the Macintosh 1.5.1

Description

Abalone is a very nice stratetic board game for two or more players.
If you don't know the rules, you can read about them in the About box.
This program is a Macintosh implementation of the game Abalone.
Each of the two or three Abalone players can be humans (local or remote on the network) or Macs, so you can use the program
- in 'demo mode' (all Mac players),
- to play against the Mac (one Mac player and one human player [you]),
- to play against others, either using one Mac or using two or three networked Macs.
Currently, four different but similar strategies can be chosen for a Mac player, and each strategy can be played at several different levels.
More strategies may be implemented in the future; good ideas for this are welcome. If your idea sounds promising and is easy to implement, I may do so some day.

Distribution

Abalone for the Macintosh is freeware, but it is copyrighted by the author.
The price for COMMERCIAL distribution is one free copy of the medium (floppy, CD-ROM, magazine, whatever) used to distribute Abalone, sent to my home address for free.
All user feedback like postcards, bug reports, questions,dollar bills, comments etc. are welcome and can be sent at my home address, or at my mail address.
You will find these addresses in the About box.

Source code

As of this version, the sources for Abalone are also made available (conditionally).
They are distributed separately, as most users will not have much use for them.
Having the sources will allow programmers to easily implement their own strategies and test them using my program. My copyrighted sources are made publicly availabe for this purpose only; it's explicitly forbidden to re-distribute a modified version of the program commercially (and this includes shareware), or with a changed About box.

Requirements

THIS PROGRAM REQUIRES SYSTEM 7.
It definately won't run under earlier system software versions.
The minimum size in the Finders Get Info box is enough to fully use the program, except for the 3D Graphics option, which makes the graphics a lot nicer.
To use this option, the preferred size should be available to the program,
and you also need to have QuickTime installed (to decompress the JPEG-ed PICTs).

(De)Installation

No special installation is needed; "just copy that floppy".
When you quit this game, your settings are automatically saved in a Preferences file (in the Preferences Folder inside the System Folder, where these files belong).
If you decide to trash Abalone, remember to remove the Abalone Preferences file.

If you don't like the background pictures provided, you can replace them with your own: create PICT resources, preferrably JPEG-medium compressed and with dimensions 494 * 430, and use them to replace the ones in Abalone with an ID in te range of 200…205. Please distribute Abalone with the original pictures. If you have some really cool picture, you can send it to me and when I also like it, I'll add it to the next version. Again, don't modify the About stuff.

Compatibility

Abalone is System 7-dependant, 32-bit compatible and Apple-Event aware.
As of version 1.3, Abalone runs in native mode on a Power Macintosh.
Abalone does not feature balloon help.

This program should be fully useable on all System-7 capable Macintosh models,
with the following limitations:
Compact Mac users will find no use for the bigger of the two possible board sizes.
(If the board is too large: clicking in the zoom box toggles between the two sizes).
The 3D colorizing option is always enabled, but looks lousy using less than 4 bits/pixel.

Abalone 1.5.1 has only been tested on my own Performa 5300.
Earlier versions have been tested on various types of Macintosh.
Please let me know if you think the current version of Abalone is incompatible with your Macintosh.

I hope you'll enjoy playing this game,

Peter Tax

Version History:

1.5.1
I guess I was a bit too eager to release 1.5.0. There was a huge new bug in the saving of files, effectively making them unreadable in many cases. This is fixed now.

1.5.0
The code starts fixing itself! With some help of Dave Dyer, that is. He fixed a bug in the handling of AppleEvents, affecting both the launching of Abalone by opening a file and the network play option on Power Macs. He also added some code to show the mouse position.
He also left some work for me to do: the saved file format now includes all relevant settings and a few levels of undo. There are also new background pictures and color icons.

1.4.2
Implemented a new strategy, removed the least succesfull old one.
Fixed a memory allocation bug, reducing memory footprint somewhat.
Snail mail and E-mail address change.

1.4.1
Fixed a bug making the About box buttons unreachable on compact Macs.

(See? sending a bug report sometimes really helps! Thanks again, Michael.)
Fixed crashing at startup with minimum memory partition on Power Macs by
increasing the minimum size to 350K. (Less may still work on 68K Macs).
Made explanation of the rules comprehensible on black&white monitors.
(white balls are now white instead of black; this really clears things up.)
Sharpened two background images somewhat.

1.4
New About pictures, including a E-mail address update.
Graphcis: board picture background added, ball lighting changed.
Minor bug fixes.

1.3
Added Power PC native code.

1.2 ß 2
Added 'greedy' board evaluation function, used in a new strategy.
Added 'status icons' in Settings menu.

1.2 ß 1
Implemented network play.
Recoded Terminator III strategy in assembly.
Rewrote the About stuff, adding explanation of the rules.
Colorized board lines.
Fixed a memory leak causing a loss of approx. 1k of memory each time a color was changed.
Fixed a bug in reading game files sometimes making it impossible to read an (otherwise valid)
game file.

1.1
Implemented the 3D colorizing option.
Improved the board appearance, also making the board slightly larger on both sizes.
Enabled the other accidentaly disabled menu items in the 1.1 ß1 version (oops).
Fixed a bug causing wrong colors in window updates after the color settings had been changed.

1.1 ß1
Replaced the old strategies by better ones.
Added alfa-beta pruning.
Added University of Waterloo contest notation.
Added University of Waterloo contest KO rule (replaces the randomness in 1.0 final)
Some performance optimization.
Undo is now multi-level.

1.0 final
General code cleanup and performance optimization, making it about twice as fast (performance
at the higher level is now acceptable on a Mac Plus).
Added sound play option.
Added some randomness in selection of move for computer players (making them a little bit
less predictable, and preventing endless repetitions in demo games).
Added UserItems counting and showing the balls already pushed off the board.
Improved screen updating.

1.0 ß3
Fixed a bug that made the computer make another move after you had won.
Some minor performance improvements in the computer players.
Added 'How to play' and 'Strategies' help windows and mail address to About.
Added a third strategy.
Added Jack Repenning's Finder color icons (thanks!), and modified the black&white icon to match these.

1.0 ß2
Fixed a bug that crashed the program on machines without Color Quickdraw.

1.0 ß1
First attempt at public release.