OpenTTD: a free transport game

Tom Ryder
tom@sanctum.geek.nz
https://sanctum.geek.nz/

Transport Tycoon—1/2

- Developed by Chris Sawyer
- Written in **x86 assembly** (!)
- Released in 1994 for DOS
- Published by MicroProse
- Sequel: *Transport Tycoon Deluxe* (1995)
- *Not* free software.

Transport Tycoon—2/2

- Start with borrowed money, pay off loan with profits
- Build transport routes between **industries** (freight cargo) and **towns** (passengers, mail)
- Build **trains**, **road vehicles**, **planes**, and **ships**
- Race AI competitors to be awarded subsidised routes
- Design complex signaling so your trains run efficiently with no crashes
- Manage reputation with towns, grow them into cities
- React to changing production rates
- Upgrade vehicles as technology advances…

Sonston East
August 1950
Train arrives at Sonston East!
£6,497

Abandonware

- People, including your humble presenter, *adored* the original game.
- But technology marched on, and the game was never updated…
- Nor did it have any worthy sequel…
- Nor a free software release…

TTDPatch

- **TTDPatch** added to and updated the game, and removed limits:
  - New vehicles
  - Electric railways
  - Build on slopes
  - Bigger stations
  - …much more…

OpenTTD

- But in the end, a patch wasn't enough…
- ***OpenTTD*** came into being!
- A complete rewrite of the game (in C)
- Many of TTDPatch's customisations adopted
- And best of all…**entirely free software (GPL)**.
  - Including the graphics and sound!

Installation

On Debian-likes:

```
$ sudo apt install openttd
```

On Red-Hat-likes:

```
$ sudo yum install openttd openttd-opengfx
```

- **Generic binaries** (download, unpack, `./openttd`)
- **Build from source** (if you want)

Yes, you can get it through **Steam**…but if you like the game because it's free software, running it in a **proprietary walled garden** defeats the point…

Extra packages

- Required:
  - **OpenGFX**: Graphics set: trains, rails, roads, houses…
- Optional:
  - **OpenMSX**: Music (retro MIDI stuff, I just play my own, e.g. BUSINESSFUNK)
  - **OpenSFX**: Sound effects (trains whistling, electric rails crackling…)

You can use the original *Transport Tycoon Deluxe* files, if you have them, but they're still proprietary, 30 years on. The free ones are better now, anyway.

Gameplay

- A screenshot is worth a thousand words…
- So, here’s a few snaps from your humble presenter’s most recent online game!

St. Carl
Growth: 16 months
2nd Jan 2051
* * PAUSED * *
$131,292,582

Crawford Copper Lode
Crawford Shorefront
Buck Field
Buck Landing Stage
2nd Jan 2061
** PAUSED **
$131,292,582

Hot Dog Stand
Inaugurated: 1860
Colour Scheme:
Vehicles: 110 trains
6 road vehicles
Company value: $132,554,966
Infrastructure: 14,066 rail pieces
2,470 road pieces
789 station tiles
View HQ
Relocate HQ
Details
Cyan
(Manager)
New Face
Colour Scheme
Manager Name
Company Name
Maestro Transport (Company 2)
Inaugurated: 1860
Colour Scheme:
Vehicles: 140 trains
6 road vehicles
18 ships
Company value: $1,096,133,216
Infrastructure: 10,576 rail pieces
108 road pieces
32 water tiles
706 station tiles
View HQ
Details
Give money
U. Lloyd
(Manager)
PAX Hillcrest–Cathedral #44
Operating Profit Graph
Key
Seasmith Copper Smelter
Requires:
Copper Ore
Chemicals
Production last month:
0 tonnes of copper (0% transported)
For maximum production rate, supply both required cargos at least once every three months.
Industry Chain
Maestro Transport – 140 Trains
Group by None
Sort by Number
All cargo types
Map – Industries
2nd Jan 2051
PAUSED
$131,292,682
Disable all
Show height

2nd Jan 2061
** PAUSED **
$131,292,582

Keeping gameplay challenging

- There are a few gameplay problems with *OpenTTD* at advanced levels that make it stale
- “Cyan” has some practical fixes I found very helpful: https://cyan.garamon.de/openttd/
- Including some recommended mods!
  - Definitely try FIRS, once you know the game

JGRPP—1/2

- The *OpenTTD* developers don’t stray *too* far from the original game design in terms of actual mechanics.
- *Jonathan G. Rennison's Patch Pack (JGRPP)* is a **parallel fork** of *OpenTTD* maintaining an extensive set of patches.

JGRPP—2/2

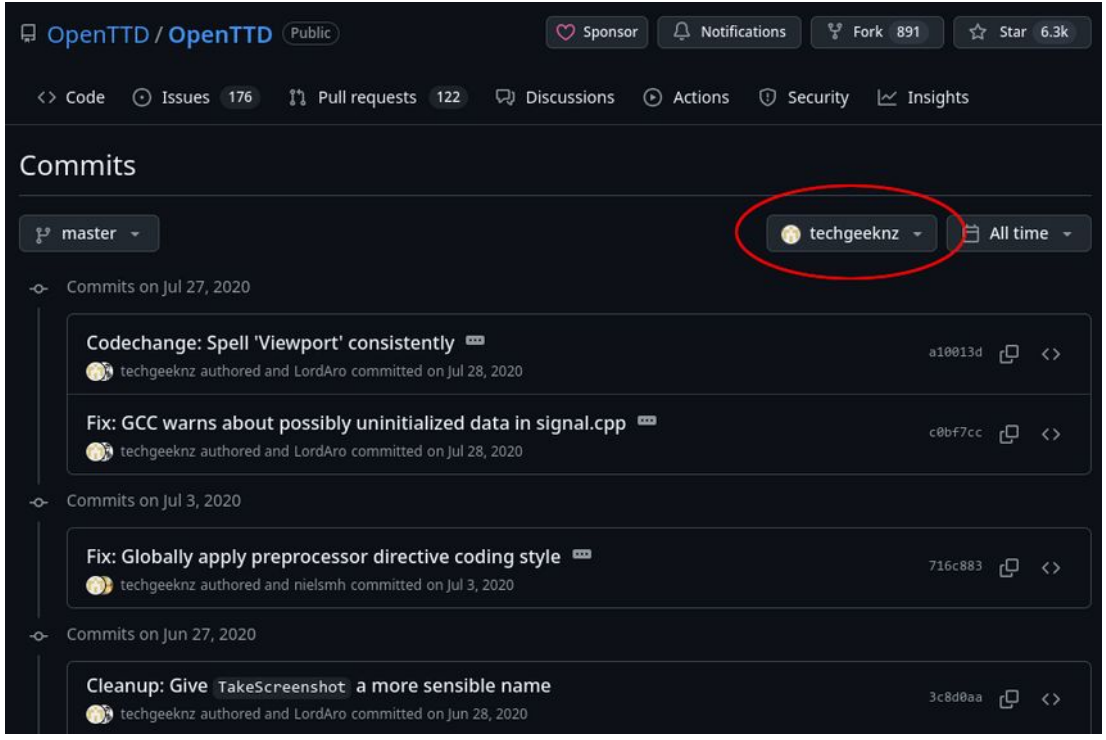
- Cargo waiting graphs
- Automatic spacing of trains on the same route
- Even more advanced signaling
- Much more…

My 2¢: I like it, and it’s definitely worth a look, but only once you’re comfortable with the base game…which is complicated enough.

Demo

- Tom will start a **new game** (v14.1) and set up a freight train route, and a bus route.
  - If you've played this game before, heckling is **encouraged**.
- Then he'll show some **saved games** from his sessions during network play with buddies.

Oh hey, look who it is!



techgeeknz (PLUG's very own Brendon Green)

Questions?

- Main site
- Wiki
- Master Hellish's tutorials
- Cyan's tips
- *JGRPP*

Email: tom@sanctum.geek.nz
Website: https://sanctum.geek.nz/
Fediverse: @tejr@mastodon.sdf.org