

AMCgames presents for the
ZX SPECTRUM Intelligent Telly

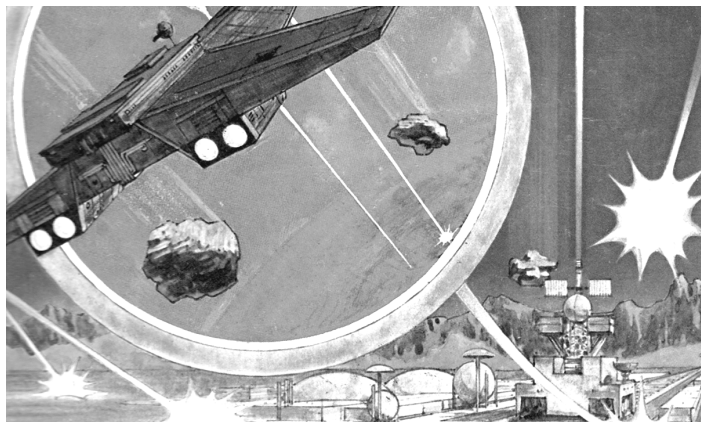
.TAP FILE INSTRUCTIONS
(FOR 1 PLAYER)

ASTROSMASH! ZX



FOR COLOR TV VIEWING ONLY

ASTROSMASH! ZX



Astrosmash! ZX is a port of the classic Intellivision game for the ZX Spectrum. It was made by **AMCgames** in 2018 with the **AGDx** variant of **Arcade Game Designer**. **Astrosmash** is the property of IntellivisionLives. **Astrosmash! ZX** is a non-commercial product, and is distributed as-is, and for free.

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Introduction

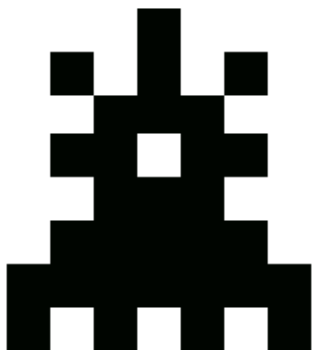
"Your planet is in peril! From above reigns down a nightmare of molten meteors and alien bombardment. Armed only with a fleet of remote-controlled laser cannons, you must hold off the attack for as long as you can."



Released in 1981 for Mattel's Intellivision console, **Astrosmash!** would go on to sell more than a million copies, making it one of the top-five games in sales for the system. Originally intended by designer John Sohl as a B-side/alternate mode game for an **Asteroids** clone, the game survived the original project being cancelled and was released on its own. Its gameplay was a mix of **Space Invaders**, **Asteroids**, and to a lesser-degree **Missile Command**. For Intellivision—a system known for its sports and recreation games more than any of its attempts to clone the arcade hits of the day—it provided a rare fast-paced, arcade-style shoot-em-up.



How to Play: Controls



"This is a standard civil defense laser cannon. Though in disrepair and overshadowed by enemy technology, they are nonetheless our last line of defense..."

In **Astrosplash! ZX** you command a fleet of laser cannons while defending your home planet against an alien invasion. As meteors, bombs, and other enemies rain down from overhead, you must shoot them out of the sky before they can wreak their destruction on the ground below. How long can you hold off the invaders?

To defend your planet, you must first familiarize yourself with the controls for the ZX Remote Laser Cannon.



O – Move your cannon to the left



P – Move your cannon to the right



M – Autofire off: Fires a single shot / With Autofire on: Hyperspace



Q – Hyperspace



Z – Engages Autofire: The cannon will fire automatically



X – Disengage Autofire



How to Play: Enemies



Large Meteor. These appear in every level, and fall at different speeds. Sometimes, when shot, they will break apart into smaller rocks.



Small Meteor. Small meteors will either appear on their own, or as the result of a large meteor being broken into two.



Large Spinning Bomb. These enemies are deadly if they hit the ground. Shoot them while they fall to avoid losing a cannon.



Small Spinning Bomb. Like their larger counterparts, but faster, if a small spinning bomb impacts the surface of the planet the player's cannon will be destroyed.



Homing Missile. These missiles are fast and deadly. They will track your movement, and strike suddenly when close. Shooting them restores your shields.

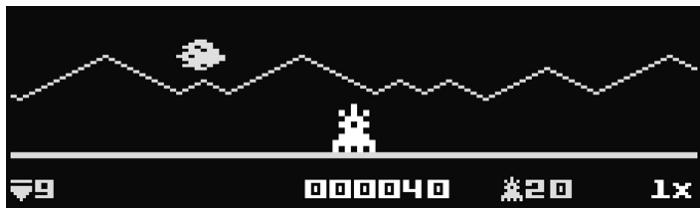


Alien Spaceship. Appearing only in levels 3x and beyond. If you are in its sights, the spaceship will attack with its laser. Shooting one down adds one cannon to the player's fleet.

(Look for secret enemies!)



How to Play: Screen Info



There are a number of different readouts for the player to consult during a game.



This is your shields readout. As meteors hit the surface, they damage the rail system the cannons use for movement. Every time a rock impacts the surface, you lose one point of shields. Your max shields are 9, and at zero the cannon will explode. Shooting a homing missile restores your shields to their full value.

180

Your score is displayed near the middle of the screen. For more information on scoring, see **How to Play: Scoring Table**.



This is a display of remaining cannons. You receive a reinforcement of 1 cannon for every 1250 points, or for shooting down the Alien Spaceship. The maximum number of cannons you can have at any time is 20.

1x

This is the level indicator. Expect more, faster, and deadlier enemies as the levels increase.



How to Play: Score Table

Large Rock	10
Small Rock	20
Big Spinner	40
Small Spinner	60
Missile	50*
Alien Spaceship	100* *

** does not appear in level 1*

*** does not appear in levels 1 or 2*

Differences in ZX Port

There are a few differences between **Astrosplash! ZX** and the original game. Most notably is the adoption of the **Shields** system, which requires a much more active response to falling meteors than the original game, which instead had a points-subtraction system, and no threat to the player except watching their score dwindle away into the negative. Also, I was pushing my luck with the number of sprites per screen, so I decided against giving the processor a more complicated score routine.

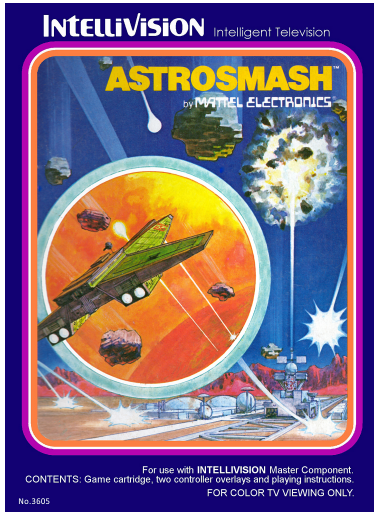
Also, to save memory, there are only two screens (black and blue), as opposed to the original game's five.

Astrosplash! ZX is not intended to be a note-perfect rendition of the classic, but rather a labour of love to bring vintage Intellivision-style gaming to the ZX Spectrum.



The History of Astromash!

(from Wikipedia and Intellivision Lives)



The original Intellivision box art for the game.

Wikipedia: **Astromash** was originally conceived when a game called **Meteor!**, an **Asteroids** clone, did not fill up the ROM space of an entire cartridge. The extra space was used to create a variation of the game called **Avalanche!** The **Meteor!** game was cancelled at the last minute, due to concerns that it was too similar to **Asteroids**. Programmer John Soh programmed a "branch" around the opening-screen menu, leading directly to the **Avalanche!** variation, retitled **Astromash**. The games were compatible,



since they were designed together, and used the same sprites and sound effects. In rare instances, if the console's reset button is pressed rapidly, an error can occur, resulting in the game starting in the original **Meteor!** format.

Mattel also released the game for the Atari 2600. Renamed **Astroblast**, it has faster play than the Intellivision original.

Intellivision Lives: Astromash quickly became one of the most popular Intellivision games thanks in large part to a very simple technique John programmed in: like most arcade-style games, **Astromash** gets faster and harder at higher levels, but unlike most arcade-style games, as you start to lose lives, the game gets easier again.

The game then is never too easy or too hard, making it extremely addictive and making it possible for even a beginner to play a single game for over an hour.



A screenshot from the original game, played on the Intellivision.



The popularity of **Astrosmash** was such that late in 1982 it replaced **Las Vegas Poker & Blackjack** as the cartridge shipped with the Intellivision Master Component. By June 1983, the last date for which figures are available, 984,900 copies of **Astrosmash** had been shipped, making it the most widely distributed cartridge by any of the Blue Sky Rangers (trailing only the APH produced **Las Vegas Poker & Blackjack** and **Major League Baseball** cartridges). John Sohl was rewarded with a plaque from Mattel and a better offer from Activision, which he took (after finishing **B-17 Bomber**).

Wikipedia: The game has six levels, each of which features increased speed and scoring. Each level is represented by a differently-colored background. Level 1 is black, level 2 is blue, level 3 is purple, level 4 is turquoise, level 5 is gray, and level 6 is black again.

The player has the option of firing single shots by pressing the fire buttons, or switching to automatic fire at a rate of three shots per second. The hyperspace option moves the gun to a random location, which may or may not be safer than the starting point.



Game inlay for the Intellivision disc-controller's keypad.



Notes

Windows users can download the original game for free from [IntellivisionLives](#), as part of their Intellipack #1. This demo pack also includes the fantastic **Utopia**, a turn-based, civilization-building strategy game a decade ahead of its time (which re-uses **Astrosmash**'s big spinner sprite as a hurricane).

To download, go to: intellivisionlives.com/downw1.shtml

Although they haven't updated their website in a few years (as of January 2018), **IntellivisionLives** is still a great source for information about the console and the development of its games, from the people who were there.

Web: intellivisionlives.com

Thanks

Thanks to **Jonathan Cauldwell**, for his creation and continuing development of **Arcade Game Designer**.

Thanks to **Allan Turvey** for his continued development of **AGDx**, a variant of **Arcade Game Designer**. **Astrosmash! ZX** was developed in **AGDx**.

Thanks to the **AGD Facebook** group for continuing to support homebrew development of games for the Spectrum.

(Try out my first game, **Space Escape**, which you can download here: www.dropbox.com/sh/9udhoimOr2zkz15/AAACMp3kUhTBVnrhG2BX5Jkza)

