

## NextQuest

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A game for the ZX Spectrum +3.

NextQuest will work on a ZX Spectrum +3 and has been developed and tested using z88dk, using TextPad as a code editor and tested primarily on Spectaculator Version 8.0.03092. In addition, the game has been tested on the Spin and Fuse Emulators and a real ZX Spectrum +3. The disk image can be written to a 3.5 inch disk and played on a real +3 as described in the Spectrum Show episode 65.

## Known Issues

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There is an issue on Spectaculator when switching in and out of Basic and machine code which causes the screen to fail to show re-draws. This happens when, swapping between the Overworld and Dungeons, Saving or Loading your party and viewing the Intro and Ending of the game. This can be remedied by pausing and un-pausing the emulator. I've not encountered this issue on any other emulator or my Spectrum +3, I've also seen it in other uses of Spectaculator so think it is an issue with Spectaculator not the game.

## The Game

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Years ago a far off Land surrounded by mountains was suddenly overrun by evil creatures. Emerging out of the South East corner of the world they spread out, bringing death and despair to the people of the land.

In the North the Wizard Vortex and the Barron Rex came together to discuss the situation.

The Wizard spoke first. "I have a bad feeling about this my old friend. I've lost all contact with the rest of my order in the Mountains of Dreams."

"They should be called the Nightmares Mountains now by all accounts." Barron Rex Replied. "Some of the smaller swifter creatures have already reached my castle. We need to do something fast or we will be overrun."

"I can delay them with the help of our friend in the Jade Castle. We can make the Emerald and Jade forests virtually impassable."

"What then, I can hold out here for a long time but eventually we will be overrun."

"We'll train a party of Heroes to go out into the world, find the source of this evil and destroy it. I can take 2 apprentices one to learn offensive magic the other to learn healing magic." The Wizard said turning to Baron Rex with a questioning look.

"I'll find 2 of my best young warriors, train one as a Knight and the other as an Archer."

“That’s decided then, now I must go to the Jade Castle. I’ve already been in touch with our friend there and he is waiting for me. There is no time to spare.” With that the Wizard was gone disappearing like he’d never been there at all.

“I wish he wouldn’t do that,” was all the Baron could say with a sigh.

Playing

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The game is split into two distinct parts, an overworld and dungeons. When I showed the game to Simon Butler he commented “...it looks like two games stuck together...”, which is in effect true.

The Overworld is inspired by Mike Singleton’s game ‘The Lords of Midnight’ and will be familiar to anyone who’s played that game. The Dungeons were inspired by Bards Tail, although I wanted a much larger viewing area than was available in that game. Combat only occurs in Dungeons and is similar to Bards Tail, select the options for your party for each round etc...

Overworld screen and movement.

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In the overworld you can look in one of 8 directions. As with The Lords of Midnight the 1-8 keys instantly select one of the 8 directions, 1 North, 2 North East, etc...

You can move forward or backwards if nothing is stopping you immediately ahead or behind. Pressing Space Brings up a Menu with various options:

Seek – seeks at your current location. NB: seeking at a hamlet will always find shelter, refreshing your stats.

Tech – Brings up the techs available to you party, and their cost in TP, in the overworld.

Return – will return the party to the last Dungeon they visited,

Teleport – allows the party to teleport to any Hamlet they have visited,

Shelter – restores the party’s HP,

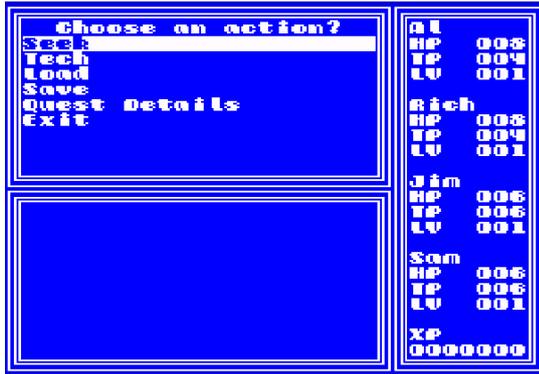
TP Boost –Restores all TP for the party except for Sam’s,

Load – allows a saved party to be loaded from one of 3 pre-defined slots,

Save – saves your party to one of 3 pre-defined slots,

Quest Details – Gives the details of your current Quest,

Exit – exists the program.



NB: If you select the menu by mistake seek is always a safe option in the overworld.

The top 4 lines of the main view show you, respectively:

- Your current location, including map co-ordinates,
- The direction your party is currently facing,
- What is ahead of the party,
- A brief description of the current quest and its location.



Your party should seek when they get to the location of the current quest. If there is a Dungeon associated with the current quest the party will be given the choice to enter the Dungeon. They can also choose to enter any Dungeon from previous quests by seeking at that quest location.

The rest of the screen shows the landscape ahead of you in the direction you are facing.

Dungeon screen and movement.

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In a Dungeon you can look and move in the 4 cardinal directions of the compass: North, South, East and West. Unlike the overworld there are no direction shortcut keys.

Like the overworld you can move immediately ahead or backward if not blocked. You can also pass through doorways, moving through a doorway advances you 2 spaces as you move entirely through the space with the door.

As with the overworld Space brings up a menu with various options:

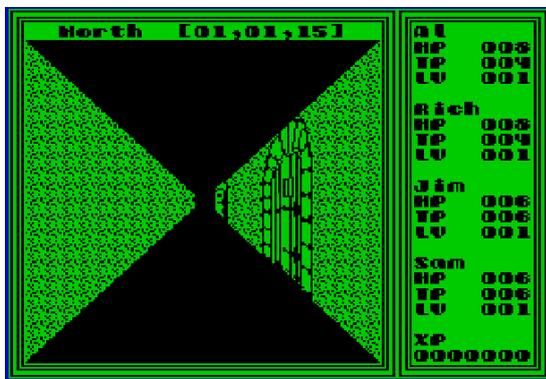
- Seek – seeks at your current location

Tech – Brings up the techs available to you party, and their cost in TP. These are the same as in the Overworld when you are not in Combat.

The left and middle of the screen show the current view in the direction facing. The top line of that view shows the direction the party is facing and the co-ordinates in the dungeon [Level,X pos (East West), Y pos (North South)]

At the right hand side of the screen are your Characters Stats showing the number of Hit Points, Tech Points and Level for each character. Then at the bottom of the Character Panel is the Experience for the whole party.

The party receives one experience point for every point of damage inflicted to a monster in the game and the party will level up together. The experience for the next level in the game is 100 times the current level of the party. So, level 2 requires 100 XP, level 3, 200 more XP, etc... When the party levels up the XP counter is decremented by the cost of the level gained.



## Combat

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While moving through a Dungeon you will encounter enemies and enter combat. In Combat the Party Stats panel remains and the view panel changes to display a picture of the enemy (top left) the enemy hit points (top centre) and a dialog box.

Upon entering combat you choose an action for each member of your party, who hasn't been reduced to 0 Hit Points. Action choices are:

Attack – Attack the enemy, if there is more than one enemy you get to choose which one to attack.

Defend – Choose not to attack this round but stand your ground. This reduces a player's chances of being hit by an enemy and will reduce their damage if they are hit.

Run – Attempt to evade the enemy, only one party member needs to successfully run for the party to evade the enemy.

Tech – Choose one of your character's techs to use against the monster(s) or on a party member or the whole party, see below for a description of all techs. NB: If you select a tech you don't have enough tech point for it will not succeed and your character will be left with 0 tech points.

Your party always has the first turn in combat then the enemy or enemies remaining will have their turn. With Techs and Attacks against multiple enemies if the enemy you selected is dead by a character's turn the character will select another enemy.



### Classes and Techs

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Each of your characters has 12 techs, most are used in combat the remaining few can be used outside of combat. The techs used outside of combat can be used in the overworld or dungeons.

#### Al (Knight)

Knights are the damage dealing experts of the land. They study combat exclusively and learn techniques to deal even more damage than their usual attacks. They also have good armour which they rely on to avoid damage.

Al's tech are used in combat only.

Tech	Effect	Cost
Power Blow	A powerful blow that increases both hit rate and damage	2
Double Hit	Perform 2 normal hits in quick succession	3
Shield	Do not attack but shield the whole party for that turn making them much more difficult to hit	4
Cleave	A very hard downward strike that inflicts terrible damage if it hits	7
Triple Hit	Perform 3 normal hits in quick succession	8
Iron Shield	A stronger version of Shield	9
Smite	A precise very hard strike that will hit and kill most enemies	22
Quad hit	Perform 4 normal hits in quick succession	23
Steel Shield	An even stronger version of shield	24
Crushing Blow	The most devastating attack a Knight can perform	47
Penta Hit	Perform 5 normal hits in quick succession	48
Diamond Shield	Makes the party virtually impossible to hit for one turn	49

#### Rich (Archer)

Archers study bows and their use. They can deal a lot of damage and also learn magic to aid their art. They have lighter armour than Knights but are also very nimble so can avoid a lot of damage.

Rich's techs are used in combat only.

Tech	Effect	Cost
Flame Arrow	Fire an arrow that explodes into a ball of flame on contact with an enemy, increasing damage and the chance of hitting	2
Double Arrow	Fire 2 arrows at an enemy or group of enemies	3
Precision	Fire an arrow with such accuracy it is guaranteed to hit	4
Ice Arrow	Fire an arrow imbued with a freezing power which damages even if it hits armour	7
Triple Arrow	Fire 3 arrows at an enemy or group of enemies	8
Cover Escape	Cover the party as they retreat from the enemy, guaranteeing their escape	9
Thunder Arrow	Fire the rare and powerful thunder arrow at an enemy	22
Quad Arrow	Fire 4 arrows at an enemy or group of enemies	23
Healing	Sam isn't they only member of the party who has healing skills	24
Silver Arrow	Fire the legendary silver arrow at an enemy, few enemies survive its accuracy or ability to find their weakest spot	47
Volley	Fire 5 arrows at an enemy or group of enemies	48
Bulls Eye	Target an enemy's eye if successful the enemy will be instantly killed	49

Jim (Mage)

Mages learn powerful magic which they can use inside and outside of combat. They can deal damage to single enemies or to a whole party of enemies. Their powerful spells can devastate any party, even a hoard of Dragons. As they grow in experience, they become even more powerful. If Jim doesn't want to use magic he's pretty good with a staff too.

Tech	Effect	Cost
Magic Bolt	Fire a bolt of magic energy at one enemy	1
Fire Bolt	Produces a fiery projectile which can damage one enemy	3 + level
Ice Bolt	Produces an icy projectile which can damage one enemy	5 + 2*level
Electric Bolt	Fires a lightning bolt at one enemy	7 + 3*level
Crush	Ouch, that's got to hurt	9 + 4*level
Magic Beam	Fires a wide beam of magic energy at a party of enemies	5
Fire Ball	Produces a large ball of fire that explodes on contact, hitting all enemies	10 + level
Ice Storm	Rather than us	15 + 2*level
Thunder	Loud and devastating	20 + 3*level
Implosion	When you absolutely, positively, have to kill every enemy you face, except no substitutes	25 + 4*level

Return (non-combat tech)	Returns the party to the entrance to the last dungeon they visited	10
Teleport (non-combat tech)	Teleports the entire party to any hamlet they have visited	20

### Sam (Healer)

Students of healing magic, healers can prolong a person's life with their healing techniques. Sam carries a pretty hefty War Hammer too for when he needs to protect himself.

Tech	Effect	Cost
Elastoplast	A quick fix for a single wound	1
Bandage	A much better fix for a single wound	3 + level
Stitches	Magically knits together several wounds	5 + 2*level
Splint Breaks	Heals bones and flesh in an instant	7 + 3*level
Surgery	Your party member will be up and about in no time	9 + 4*level
Patch up	An Elastoplast each for the whole party	5
House Call	While I'm here I'll have a look at everyone	10 + level
Penicillin	A magical medicine that gets everyone back on their feet	15 + 2*level
Orange Halves	In days gone by mighty warriors, having battled for over 45 minutes, would instantly return to battle after this magical elixir	20 + 3*level
Heal Ray	Heals the entire party of all wounds	25 + 4*level
Shelter (non-combat tech)	Restores all HP to the party	50
TP Boost (non-combat tech)	Restores all TP to the party, except for Sam's	100

### Advice and Tips

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I'm expecting most people to play this on an emulator. Running at 2x or 4x speed will greatly speed up the game, that's how I play Lords of Midnight these days. Be careful of running it too fast as it makes the menu choices difficult.

When the game starts the party in slot 1 is loaded. The initial disk image contains parties at levels 1, 3 and 5 in slots 1-3 respectively. It is possible to complete the game starting at level 1, I've done it several times, but for an easier start the player can choose to start with the party from slot 2 or 3. I added the level 3 and 5 parties as I have a bugbear about RPGs where highly trained teams start at level 1.

In dungeons there are traps, which reduce the parties HP, and mana drains, which reduce their TP. There are also rest points and mana springs which grant HP and TP respectively.

This game is an RPG so saving often is recommended as is a bit of grinding now and then.

In dungeons almost everything you can find is behind a door, try searching.

A dungeon map editor is included with the game, use 'load "edit"' in +3 basic to access the editor. If you are lost in a dungeon or don't want to make a map it is a quick way to find your way around. I used it a lot when testing the game. You can even make your own dungeons maps and save them if you want to.

Dungeons have 3 levels and each has an up and down point. Finding the down point of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level will give the party the prize for that dungeon, if they haven't already found it, and exit back to the overworld. Note: Your party doesn't have to fight its way out of the dungeon once it has found the prize.

There is some more advice in the introduction to the game.

#### Controls

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Q=Move Forward/Menu Up/Move the cursor up in the map editor

A=Move Backwards/Menu Down/Move the cursor down in the map editor

O=Rotate View Left/Move the cursor left in the map editor

P= Rotate View Right/Move the cursor right in the map editor

SPACE=Menu/Select Menu Option

Overworld instantaneous directions:

1 – North

2 – North East

3 – East

4 – South East

5 – South

6 – South West

7 – West

8 – South West