

Control

Introduction

Control is a team management game set in the world of Cold War espionage where players work for control of the intelligence community.

Gameplay

The player controls the organization of his agency and the assignment of agents to tasks in the agency. Agents are assigned to cities in the world and they are able to perform missions in that city.

Agents can perform missions in their home country or be sent to the other countries. They can perform several tasks such as intercepting communications, infiltrate other agencies etc. By successfully placing agents inside another agency it is possible to gain control of other agencies and influence the governments of the other countries.

The countries in the game are divided into three factions: NATO, Warsaw pact and neutral countries. If a country is sufficiently influenced by agents from another country it may change its allegiance. A potential goal for a player playing as USA/CIA may for an example be to destabilize the Warsaw pact by influencing countries to become neutral or join NATO.

The players' agency is allocated a sum of money by the countries leaders each month that are used to pay for salaries and other expenses. The amount of money the player receives depends primarily on the view the countries leaders have of the results of the agency. One of the main challenges for the player is balancing the budget and making sure that he receives more money to allow for bigger operations.

There is a risk involved in performing missions. Agents may die, or even worse, be captured while performing their mission. Dead agents need to be replaced and captured agents may leak information regarding your organization to the other countries agency. If too many missions are failed this will influence the flow of money to the agency in a bad way. Should the player run out of money or acquire a too poor reputation with his country the game will be lost.

After successfully infiltrating a foreign agency an agent becomes a double agent. This agent will appear to be a part of the foreign agency but will in fact be controlled by the player and can leak information from the infiltrated agency. The player can order the agent to leak specific documents or perform missions when he is a double agent. Leaked documents may be traced back to the double agent so it has to be done with care. If the double agent performs missions the risk for him to be discovered increases.

The game is played on a world map with windows appearing for the different interactions. The game is turn-based with each turn representing one day of the game. The speed of the game can be controlled by the player, giving lots of time to deal with hectic situations but also allowing the game to go faster when there is less action.

Each day there is a chance for random events to happen. These events have different effects on the game world. One event could be a major military drill in a country and intelligence on it may be more highly valued than normal intelligence giving you more reputation if you are able to acquire information on it. There are also historical events, these are based on real world history and have set dates or periods where they can happen. However they are dependent on a set of prerequisite conditions and won't happen if the game has diverged too much from history. One such event would be the Cuban missile crisis.

Certain events form part of a chain where the later events depend on the earlier ones and the players' actions in response to them.

The Agency

Each country has an intelligence agency. The agencies are organized into two departments: external affairs and internal affairs. At the top each agency is the director. One of these is the player. Below the director are three more directors, these are the most experienced agents in your agency. They each have a responsibility: the external director leads external affairs; the internal director leads internal affairs and the budget director is responsible for the agencies money.

External affairs contain all the agents assigned to missions regarding other countries. These agents perform the day-to-day missions that provide the agency with reputation and in extension money. A highly experienced external director will improve the performance of all foreign missions. The external director will also gain experience from these missions.

Internal affairs contain all the agents assigned to internal security for your country and agency. These will still be deployed to other countries but they perform missions related to the security of the agency and its agents. These are the agents that screen the agency from double agents. They also try to root out the foreign agents working in your country. The internal director has the same effect on these as the external director has on his department.

The budget director makes sure that the money in the agency keeps flowing. A highly experienced budget director will decrease salary and mission costs as he is able to better administrate payments. Replacing a budget director with a double agent is a very powerful move as it provides access to the financial records of all the agencies agents and missions.

Agents

Each agent has a set of attributes deciding how good they are at performing different tasks. The agents also have a salary that depends on how high their attributes are. When an agent performs missions he will gain experience in the attributes required for that mission. The initial attributes of an agent are randomly distributed from a small pool of available attribute points. The agents don't have a name instead they use a codename ensuring their anonymity.

World

A selection of interesting countries is represented in the game due to their historical relevance to the Cold War. All the represented countries have a playable agency. The countries/ agencies not controlled by the players will be controlled by the computer.

The cities the agents can be sent to are the capitals of the games countries. One exception is Berlin which is shared by East and West Germany as one city. As these countries are members of opposing factions this does not unbalance the amount of cities per faction. As Berlin is shared between two countries it is possible to perform missions on foreign soil without first moving an agent to another country making Berlin unique.

Objectives

As the leader of an intelligence agency it is your goal to strengthen your own country and faction by providing them with good intelligence and influencing the other countries. There is no formal way to win the game. It is instead meant to allow the player to create their own experience and set their own goals.

Money

In order to continue playing the game the player needs money to pay the salaries of his agents and fund the missions.

Money is received on a monthly basis from the government of your country. The amount of money received depends on the players' reputation. A higher reputation leads to more money, a lower reputation leads to less money.

If the player runs out of money and is unable to pay the salaries of his agents the game is lost and ends.

Reputation

Reputation is the view the countries leaders have of the player. Reputation influences the money flow into the agency. Reputation can be gained by successfully completing missions. Failed missions will decrease reputation.

Reputation is primarily gained by performing missions like industrial or military espionage where it is easy to convince your government that you are doing a good job by giving them reports and other tangible results.

If an agent is exposed or captured reputation is severely decreased meaning that it is dangerous to fail several missions in a short time.

Influence

Influencing another nation will move them towards your faction. If the combined influence from one faction gets large enough the influenced country will change faction. In this case the neutral countries are considered as one faction and their influence will be summed up just like the other two factions.

Influence can be gained by the completion of certain missions such as supporting the political opposition. It is easier to influence a nation if you have infiltrated their agency with double agents.

Audience

The game is meant for mature players who want to think while playing. Finishing the game can take over ten hours but it is possible to save the game at any point so a session can be as long or short as the player likes. The game is meant to be played several times and can have different outcomes.

Platform

The game is playable on PC and Mac.

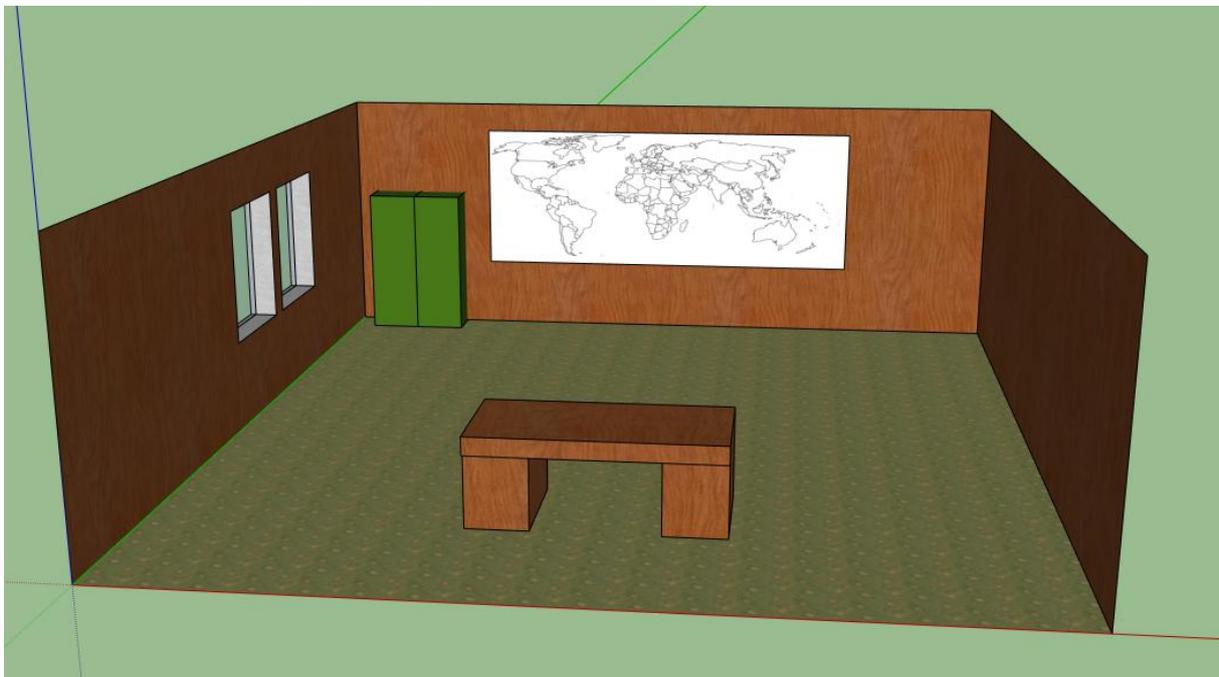
HCI

The player primarily interacts with the game with the mouse and keyboard. The mouse is used for interactions with game objects and camera control. The keyboard is used for key-shortcuts for common actions.

Game world

The game is presented as the office of the agency director. The office is presented in 3D from the perspective of the director's chair behind his desk. The player is free to look around but is unable to move from the chair. The world is presented on a world map on the opposite wall of the office. Active agents and missions are represented by symbols on the map. The player can zoom in on the map by interacting with it, giving a more detailed view. The map is colored according to the factions of the countries.

The player can bring up documents to front of the view. Examples of documents are agent profiles, mission specifications and agency organization. These documents are brought up to front filling most of the screen and blurring the background.



All player information is presented as part of the office. The date is given by a calendar on the wall. The date is also visible in the corner of the screen when the player has zoomed in on the map or is interacting with a document.

Game events and mission results are dropped into a mail inbox on the players' desk. This is accompanied by a sound effect alerting the player to the new documents available. When the player is watching the map or a document a mail icon appears in the corner next to the date. The player can review the incoming documents by interacting with the inbox.

In the office there is also a filing cabinet. When interacting with it you pull up the archives containing all agent profiles, all old missions and all known information on the other agencies.

When a historic event happens a newspaper will appear in front of the screen containing information about the event.

Setting

The game takes place during the cold war with the game starting in 1955 and ending in 1990. The game is meant to evoke a sense of paranoia where you have to find out which agents can be trusted and try to stay ahead of the enemy.

Playing the game

When starting a new game the first thing to do is bringing up the agency organization. This is done by clicking on the agency symbol over the capital on the map. On this screen you can see the starting organization of your agency and the directors of the departments.

After reviewing the assets that you have it is time to start making money. To make money you need to raise your reputation. This is most easily done by succeeding at missions. Select an agent in the capital from the map and right click in another city to send him there. Make sure it is an agent from external affairs. A document appears with a blank mission profile. Select *Military espionage* from the list of mission types and approve the mission. The agent will start moving across the map to his new assignment.

While the agent starts performing his mission select another agent in the capital. This time select an agent from internal affairs. Right click on the capital to create a new mission there. Select *monitor communications* as the mission type. This agent will now attempt to monitor foreign communications there to flush out foreign agents.

By now you should have a new mission report in the inbox from the industrial espionage. Zoom out from the map and click on the inbox to bring up the report. It will give you a summary of the results of the mission so far and the amount of reputation gained. This type of mission will continue until cancelled, bringing in more reputation.

The internal affairs agent has sent in a new mission report and he has intercepted documents that have leaked from your agency. This indicates that there is a double agent working inside your agency. The documents were addressed to the Russian embassy so you can be quite sure the double agent is working for them. To find out more you send more internal affairs agents to Moscow to find more information, initiating a cat and mouse chase to find the agent before he realizes that he has been made.

Art direction

The game style is realistic but gives a sense of anonymity. The art of the game is supposed to reflect the anonymity of the agents and the general paranoia of the Cold War. To give the game a slightly old feel colors will be slightly desaturated. Photographs of agents will be black-and-white and they will be taken in ways that the faces cannot be seen, either because of shadows or camera angle. Most agents will be wearing trench coats and sometimes hats.

The documents that are visible in the game (agent profiles etc.) will be presented in the style of document folders and papers. Text will be presented with a typewriter like font. Photographs are attached to the documents with paperclips.

The music in the game is slow and low setting the mood for the game. Different instruments are used for ambience and piano for the melody giving a slightly melancholy feel.

