

JKRobots

Welcome to the beta test

Discord link: <https://discord.gg/TtFkZZQqxT>

Email: jk@jkrobots.com

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@JKRobots>

Steam Page: <https://store.steampowered.com/app/4424780/JKRobots/>

Web Page: <https://jkrobots.com/beta/>

If you just want to start playing the game, the quickest way to learn how the game works is to watch the Youtube videos:

Beta Test Guide: <https://youtu.be/toeskaAyeKQ>

Tutorial Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnIiyqc77WM>

If you want to learn how and why the game was made and what I am looking for in feedback read below:

A brief description of the game

I started with a few ideas:

- Most RTS games the player stays on defence near their main base, maybe expands a bit, techs, then builds a max size army and death balls the AI.
- I wanted the player to go out and get resources by controlling a large part of the map before being able to defeat the AI.
- Limits to sustain so that the units would have to be recharged/rearmed so the army cannot death ball.
- The AI has large waves of units that would look like a waterfall versus a blob.
- A bit less micro in combat, the tanks automatically hit the most favourable target, the area of effect tank in particular always hits the largest cluster of robots.
- Less kiting, some of the robots can, some cannot.
- Distance matters, the further a resource is, the more logistics are required to obtain it.
- Upgrade system where the unit has to go back to base versus magically obtaining the upgrade when researched.

I did not have any ideas of the actual game mechanics, just a general idea of what the game would be. The game evolved from these ideas.

The mechanics that I settled with are:

- Everything in the game has power, there is a power meter on the right of the screen and when out of power the lights go out.
 - I was thinking of having many lamps in the game and soft fog of war controlling the lamps, but I realized low end gpus would not like that so I went with one directional light and a backup omni light.
- Power is required for:
 - Defence, for the towers lasers plus their shields
 - Offence, the vehicles need to recharge their batteries, the ammunition based vehicles require power to make cannonballs, artillery and decoys.
 - Upgrades, the upgrades require potash or lithium which are mined and take a lot of power.
 - Economy, to produce weapons and energy rods require power to obtain water.
- A large amount of the management in the game is to make sure there is enough power in the batteries and enough fuel for power generation.
- Nearly all the production buildings are provided, as the only tester I didn't want to build the same buildings in the opener every game, so why should the player.
- Usually the player is provided with one power plant in the building truck to start the game.
 - The player has to build additional power plants, recharge ports, towers, transmission towers, battery plants.
- There is only one difficulty that is slightly easier than I normally play, however the player is given unlimited free resources if they desire with the giving tree:
 - Hard mode is the default
 - Normal mode uses the giving tree as it is set
 - Easy mode use the giving tree as many times as desired

Unit and Combat Mechanics:

- The robots are melee only, the player is only ranged. The player has a decoy that draws aggro. The decoy is also used to gather experience (towers don't) for upgrading.
- No player units or building are destroyed just disabled:
 - Losing at army can be frustrating and often a player would just save/load.
 - There is only a small penalty for disabling tanks, they have to be towed back.
 - Disabled buildings can be shocked back to life.
 - The amount of lithium for batteries in a map is finite so losing units would cause the map to have to be restarted.
- The main robot bases sends out units to attack the player and robot camps that are defensive:
 - The robot bases attack in various different ways, and can help each.
 - They are mostly reactive so the faster the player moves forward in the map the larger the reaction.

- There is some rubber banding so generally the player can win most maps regardless of the situation without having to restart, although it may take too long and sometimes restart is correct.
- The robot bases can rebuild robot camps.
- When all robots in the base are destroyed the base self destructs.
- While aggro the base does not produce more units, but when not aggro, it produces units if possible (based on its oil supply), and heals all of its units.
- The robot camps are defensive:
 - All robots in the aggro group have to be destroyed for the camp to self destruct.
 - While aggro the base does not produce more units, but when not aggro, it produces units if possible and heals all of its units.
 - Some of the robots spawned by the camp are not in the aggro group, they flash yellow when attacked, these do not rebuild.
 - Other robots flash purple these are in the aggro group.
 - Helper robots from a robot base flash red.

Weapons and upgrades:

- All weapons are grown on trees, which:
 - Seeds have to be obtained in the map.
 - Trees have to be watered to grow and produce weapons.
 - Trees also produce energy rods for a power plant.
 - Trees gradually gain experience however experience is obtained by fighting or with a tree of knowledge.
 - When trees have enough experience they can be upgraded with potash.
 - There are also instant upgrades in the later maps.
- Battery capacity in both tanks and for the buildings can be increased by mining lithium
- 5 laser weapons
 - Basic laser, always targets closest robot.
 - MultiShot laser, always targets largest cluster, does not go through shields.
 - Anti Shield laser, always targets shielded units if possible.
 - FlameThrower (kind of laser) targets largest hit point unit, not that useful against low hit point units, does not go through shields.
 - Slow laser, targets the nearest robots in a sweep.
- Artillery, upgraded types in the later maps.
- Cannon ball, (designed as a shotgun as in shotgunning zombies), upgraded types in later maps.
- Decoy tanks, draws aggro and gains experience, upgraded types in later maps.

The Maps:

- All maps can be played in any order
- There are 5 tutorial maps:
 - 4 are part of a progression.
 - The sandbox tutorial is the quicker way for RTS veterans to get in the game.
 - Either 1-4 should be played or just the sandbox.
- Map 1-4 introduce mechanics take around 45 minutes each.

- Map 5-8 have more challenge but are straight forward they take around 1:30 minutes each.
- Maps 9-16 the robot hits with more force, and the player has to react more to the attacks, they can take up to 3 hours to play.

The beta test

So far its been just me making and playing the game. It took around 1 year for the mechanics, 6 months to make the maps the first time and additional mechanic fixes, 1 month one to redo the maps after figuring it out. 1 month for improving graphics, and 1 month waiting for steam keys, which I spent recording making of videos. I didn't have anything worth going to a beta until the last 2 months of development.

Things I am worried about,

- Are the tutorials too slow or not that good?
 - I generally don't like the opening tutorial in most games.
 - The game have a few unique mechanics so it is probably required.
 - There is a video of the sandbox tutorial being played here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnIiyqc77WM>
- I like the idea that when the power is out the lights go out.
 - Should the maps start dark?
 - The starting battery power is adjustable in the settings.
 - I can also automatically connect the transmission tower to the battery in the start of the game.
- Is the pacing of the maps too slow?
 - I did not really plan the length but generally speaking the game takes longer than most other RTS games.
 - The early maps are 45 minutes and it goes to between 2-3 hours for the later ones.
 - Believe it or not some of the later maps took 4 hours, before I added instant upgrades and more free resources.

Feedback

- The main feedback I am looking for:
 - Are the tutorial playable or frustrating
 - Are the tutorials instructive enough?
 - When playing the maps is there a point where its too slow and frustrating in particular the player just wants to quit playing?
 - There is a giving tree that gives unlimited resources to speed things up, so if it is too slow use the giving tree and let me know how many times.
 - Is the building and unit inventory menu correct?
 - Any map ideas to make them better? Or for new maps?
- The game isn't a fast micro game like Starcraft

- Originally I wanted the game to work like warcraft3 4 vs 4, but instead it is more like a simulation style game with some RTS.
- The idea of 2 dps heros (artillery and cannon) and 1 control hero (engineering) is how I played Warcraft 3 4 vs 4
- If you like faster games it is not something I can fix (yet)
- The graphics:
 - I created nearly all the models in blender myself, my background is software so it is what is is:
 - The idea was that they are good enough. I can have hundreds on the screen at once, Godot does not like that many individual units. To run it well I use multimesh which means they can only be animated with shaders, with only 4 floats. One for the hit points, one for the movement, one for the upgrade state, and one other animation. I cannot really improve things that much further given the game engine.
 - I can easily adjust the color schemes, or the model.
 - I am guessing most people will play the game zoomed out, so adding more detail would probably not get noticed on a standard monitor.

If you like the game please review it, or even if it just ok, having a review that confirms it has 25+ hours of game play and runs smooth that would be good.

Also if your interested.....

I had some time waiting for steam keys so I made a making of series. I was inspired by a Godot making of RTS series on youtube before starting on this games development. That person started out by making something similar to age of empires. Unfortunately they didn't finish so I thought I would make a series since I know I finished.

Here are the links, they are currently (mostly) unlisted:

<https://youtu.be/RwhOIVUxd1c>
<https://youtu.be/J23jMHgm9L0>
<https://youtu.be/REKKWiopqAg>
https://youtu.be/RSIYgwj_uMI
<https://youtu.be/b1o1Z56oRpE>
<https://youtu.be/A4kcBIf1gAY>
<https://youtu.be/Ch-YVnrCTFY>
<https://youtu.be/KF2uybCx0-A>
<https://youtu.be/cnaxp0bEGTs>
<https://youtu.be/BVkfTcdu67M>
https://youtu.be/jgm_weNFZeU
<https://youtu.be/h1ArXAVEug8>
https://youtu.be/zx_U5Wn9rWM
<https://youtu.be/dB1KMZNP8e4>
<https://youtu.be/5e5rHXuJXgM>
<https://youtu.be/8U5iJq-CVS0>
<https://youtu.be/-w-5fmkwMcs>
<https://youtu.be/pI4629k4bFU>