

Installing the IBM Elite Games on a Windows XP PC

So you want to play all the IBM games on a Windows XP machine? No problem!

My Pentium 166mhz which ran all the games perfectly for years finally gave out, so I decided to finally do something about getting the originals to work on a newer machine. The following will show you how to do it, including adding sound afterwards to all the games.

I also created a lot of mods for the games, especially Elite Plus and Frontier Elite II. Using these setups I found most of them still work great. I did not do any mods for the original IBM Elite. As for Frontier First Encounters I went with an original CD version plus JJFFEE. I ended up with all the original games working perfectly on my XP PC, in full screen mode. So if you want to play the games in their original release, here's your chance.

My setup per the following puts all the games in a C:\Games folder for easy access per a Start-Run command. No sense cluttering up the Program Files folder trying to find the games. There is little to do other than getting the files in the right folders. So get to know Windows Explorer (right click on the Start button, then left click on Explore), and you'll install the games with ease. You'll also need to apps to unzip both .zip and .rar files. I find that WinRar works great.

WARNING: Use these instructions at your own risk. As none of the games load any windows files, there should not be any issues other than they might not work per a given setup. Just follow the instructions carefully and don't make mistakes!

Note that my XP PC is a Pentium 4 at 2.8mHZ CPU, 1Gb DDR RAM, Direct X 9.0c, NVidia GeForce 5900 Ultra with 256Mb, and a RealTech AC97 system board audio. Your performance results may vary.

Elite - Fully playable version

Issues: PC Speaker support only (There was no soundcard support)
File size: 49kb

Create a folder called C:\Games\Elite
Download the game to this folder at the following link:

<http://www.iancgbell.clara.net/elite/archive/a/a7100000.zip>

Unzip the file to C:\Games\Elite
Delete the a7100000.zip file.
Run Elite.exe to start the game.

Elite Plus - Fully playable version

Issues: PC Speaker support only.
File size: 240 kb

Create a folder called C:\Games\ElitePlus
Download the game to this folder at the following link:

<http://www.iancgbell.clara.net/elite/archive/a/b1022001.zip>

Unzip the file to C:\Games\ElitePlus
Delete the b1022001.zip file.
Run Elite.exe to start the game.

Note that any word will work at the password screen.

Frontier - Fully playable version

Issues: No sound supported
File size: 468 kb

Download the game to the desktop at the following link:

<http://www.eliteclub.co.uk/download/frontier.zip>

Unzip the file to C:\Games
Note that the zip file will create a C:\Games\Frontier folder.
Delete the frontier.zip file. On the desktop.

Thanks to **Paul Roberts** at <http://www.m3fe.com/> for the following setup info.

Frontier won't run straight off under XP as the DOS boxes don't have enough base memory when EMS support is enabled. However, it's easy enough to sort out.

Locate the "autoexec.nt" file in C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32, make a backup, then open the original in a text editor. A few lines down from the top you'll find the following entries:

```
REM Install CD ROM extensions  
lh %SystemRoot%\system32\mscdexnt.exe
```

```
REM Install network redirector (load before dosx.exe)  
lh %SystemRoot%\system32\redir
```

```
REM Install DPMI support  
lh %SystemRoot%\system32\dosx
```

Now, add REM statements in front of the three commands, so they look like this:

```
REM Install CD ROM extensions  
REM lh %SystemRoot%\system32\mscdexnt.exe
```

```
REM Install network redirector (load before dosx.exe)  
REM lh %SystemRoot%\system32\redir
```

```
REM Install DPMI support  
REM lh %SystemRoot%\system32\dosx
```

This stops some memory-eating stuff from loading every time you run a DOS game. If you run stuff that needs these, you might have to take out the relevant REMs.

Right Click on FRONTIER.EXE and edit its properties.

In the Memory tab, set Conventional memory to 600
Untick Protected
Set Initial environment to Auto
Set Expanded memory to 1024
Set Extended memory to None
Set and DPMI memory to Auto
Uncheck "Uses HMA".

Run Frontier.exe to start the game.

(Note from George: I also used these properties settings for Elite and Elite Plus, just in case! Also this Frontier version still has password protection. Install the fe2pro.zip file on my utilities page to resolve the problem)

With these settings I run Frontier under XP without significant problems. Sound isn't available as the basic Soundblaster 2.0 emulation present in XP doesn't appear to include an FM synth. Or if it does, I haven't had it working in Frontier yet. If you really want sound, give VDMSound a shot:

Regards,
Paul Roberts

VDM Sound

OK, you want sound and music for Elite Plus and Frontier? I tried VDMSound using Windows XP on both and it works great, even perfectly emulating the low quality intro tunes per the limitations of PC audio when the games were first release. Nope, it isn't a sound default. That's how they actually sounded! You can download it at:

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/vdmsound/?abmode=1>

But Wait! VDMSound also provides joystick support! Yes, my USB Saitek Cyborg Evo actually worked with Frontier with excellent speed.

Note that VDMSound will only run on Windows NT 4 SP3, Win 2000, or Win XP. It will not work with Windows 95, 98, or Millennium.

JJFFE - Frontier First Encounters - Fully playable version

VDMSound not needed.

This is the procedure for the Elite Club shareware version, but it will also work with the original 3.5in disk and CD versions. Just read the jjffe28.txt text file before starting. Also note the new and very useful commands added to the game.

Create a folder called C:\Games\Firstenc
Download the game to this folder at the following link:

<http://www.eliteclub.co.uk/download/firstenc.zip>

Unzip the file to C:\Games\Firstenc
Delete the firstenc.zip file.

Download jjFFE to this folder at the following link:

<http://jaj22.org.uk/jjffe/ffwin28a7.zip>

This is direct access to the current version, and of course will not work when a newer version is released. Then just go to the download site at:

<http://jaj22.org.uk/jjffe/download.html>

Unzip the file to C:\Games\Firstenc
Delete the ffwin28a7.zip file.

Run ffwin28a.exe to start the game.

Edit the ffwin.cfg file to tweak startup screen, music, and joystick per your specific hardware. Pretty simple with items like change full screen=0 to 1 and the game will start in full screen mode.

That's it. I've verified that my custom ships work on Elite Plus, Frontier, and Frontier First Encounters. For Frontier and FFE, create a COMMANDR folder in the game directory and save the ships to it. The game will look for this folder upon startup.

My mods on the utility page will work in Elite Plus and Frontier. The old FFE mods will not work as the original firstenc.exe file has been replaced. But I've already started working on mods for the JJFFE version with updated hex code listings coming soon.

The good news: The data is still there, just relocated per:

| Game | Old data file | New data file |
|-------|---------------|----------------|
| JJFFE | firstenc.exe | winffe28a7.exe |

The starting addresses will change and a simple search will find them. Edit the new files instead of the old firstenc.exe files. Note that the rules for saving the original file before replacing it with a modified one still applies!

The bad news: With each new release of JJFFE, the hex addresses can change. However you can download a modified version of the current release Utility page.