Adventures
in
Mapping

Blue
Cave

Witt's
End

Moe's
Deli

Nama's
Room

magnet

Lost &
Found

Orcs on
Parade

Grue's
Jacuzzi

Orcs
R Us

Ennio's
Office

News
Room

obsidian
orb

harmonica

Pyramid
of Xuluui

Troll
Bridge

Motel 6

Dragon's
Den

*magic
fingers

*chips

Robot
Repair

Casino

editor

Shay's
Lounge

Mapping Text and Graphic Adventures

Take a Left at the Werewolf...
Or was that a right?

Transylvania is one of the most economical adventures in terms of the number of locations, yet its odd twists and turns can be confusing. And if you try to escape the werewolf by typing "go west"—only to learn there's no exit in that direction—we all know what he'll be having for dinner. The problem usually emerges when you resume a game saved the previous night and attempt to retrace your path according to the map—only to find you can't tell from those hastily scrawled lines whether the Jewel Room lies to the northeast or northwest of the Room of Dead Snails, or if you're supposed to go up or down that gloomy, skull-encrusted staircase to reach the Wizard's den. Nothing is more irritating than to find yourself lost in a place you've just spent several hours mapping.

Despite my formal education at the Sheboygan Institute of Cartography, that was my fate for the first few years I played adventures—a fate that rapidly worsened when I assumed the task of verifying all the walkthroughs submitted by QuestBusters' readers, many of which are accompanied by the sketchiest of maps or none at all. (Some people do send excellent maps, however.) To keep from being swallowed up by piles of paper like Robert Dinero in the film *Brazil*, I gradually synthesized a system that simplifies the map-making process, a collection of techniques that has evolved into the *QuestBusters Cartography System*. By adhering to these guidelines you will not only produce better maps in less time, but will also enhance your chances of solving the puzzles found in those fascinating worlds of adventure.

Greed Kills

Adventurers are best known for their greed. To improve your puzzle-solving skills, you have to restrain yourself—and retrain yourself. Instead of roaming about scooping up objects and trying to determine their functions right away, always invest your first few hours in a new adventure in laying a solid foundation for future sessions. Without a good map, you're sure to discover a valuable item or location, then get killed and not be able to find it again for three days. The first thing to do is label a sheet of the Official QuestBusters Mapping Paper at the top. You might call the first one "A: Outside the Mansion," for example. A vertical orientation is preferable, and if necessary you can transfer the results to a horizontally oriented sheet before going too far.

Back to Square One

Beginning at square one, write the name of the starting location in a box at the center of the paper. Now try moving in every possible
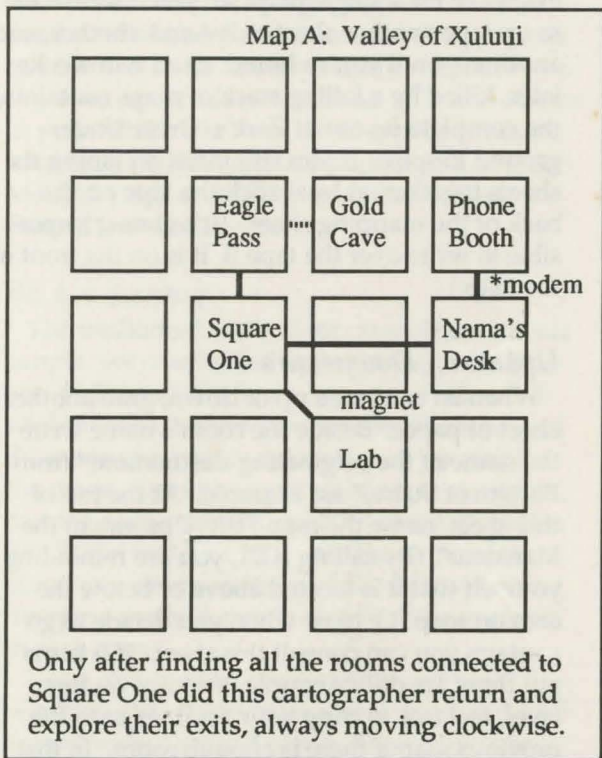
The Magic Mapping Template

Instead of drawing your first map of an area on paper, inscribe it on the Magic Mapping Template with a china pencil or wipe-off pen. These are available in a variety of colors at any office supply or stationery store. Black is fine for text and graphic adventures, but many cartographers prefer to color-code the secret doors, clues and other elements of the mazes in role-playing mazes.

The magic of the Template is that you'll be able to simply wipe off a wall you drew in the wrong place and redraw it, or erase and redraw two rooms to make way for a new one. After confident the first area is accurately mapped, copy it to a sheet of Mapping Paper before mapping the next area on the Template. This method can save hours of time otherwise spent redrawing an entire map several times on paper.

direction from that location. To eliminate the chance of missing any exits and the locations to which they lead, establish a routine: Type "north." If you reach a new location record its name in a

Map A: Valley of Xuluui

	Eagle Pass	Gold Cave	Phone Booth
			*modem
	Square One		Nama's Desk
		magnet	
		Lab	

Only after finding all the rooms connected to Square One did this cartographer return and explore their exits, always moving clockwise.

box—and immediately go south. In most cases you will be back at square one, so draw a line connecting the two squares. Then go northeast and repeat the process, cycling clockwise through the directions and finally checking for exits leading up and down. Don't be fooled by games that purport to tell you in which direction exits lie, for these are often misleading. If an exit proves to be one-way, indicate this with an arrow, then restart the game and continue checking out the exits from square one.

Once you are sure of the area around square one, return to the location due north of it and repeat the process from there. Then do the same for each location accessible from the first one. Throughout the initial mapping phase stay alert for secret entrances. Put a question mark in rooms that may warrant further investigation.
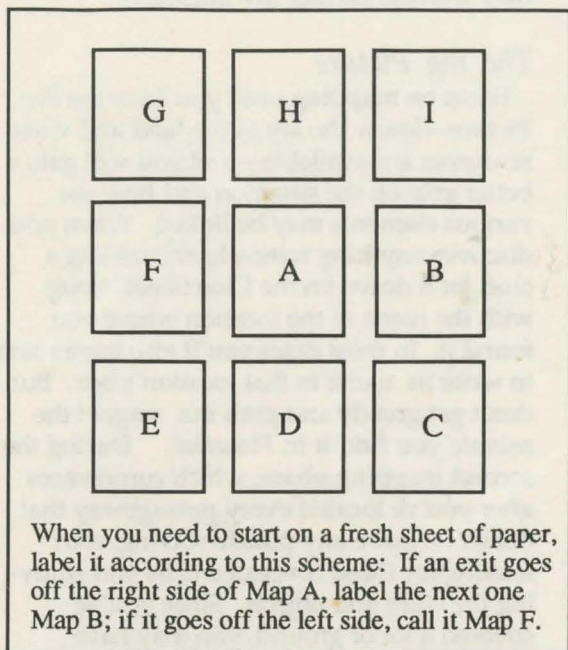
The Big Picture

Focus on mapping until you have the Big Picture—know the lay of the land and what resources are available—and you will gain a better grip on the situation and how the various elements may be linked. When you discover anything remotely resembling a clue, jot it down on the Clue Sheet, along with the name of the location where you found it. In most cases you'll also have room to write its name in that location's box. But don't get greedy and grab the magnet the minute you find it in *Planetfall*. During the second mapping phase, which commences after you've located every passageway that doesn't require any puzzle-solving, start looking for those concealed exits and studying the clues and objects. Since you've covered a lot of ground, you may have already stumbled across a likely place to use the magnet (like that crack in the hall floor) and won't have wasted as much time as if you had tried to use it in each room you discover.

If locations are linked by unusual methods, such as uttering magic words or manipulating objects, connect the boxes with a dotted line. Write the requirements in the boxes if there is room, and definitely on a Clue Sheet. By filling in Clue Sheets as you go, you will be better prepared when it's time to tackle the puzzles. With the objects, clues, characters and puzzles listed in one place, you can quickly compare them for interlinking characteristics.

Any item that cannot be obtained without first solving a puzzle should be marked with an asterisk or some other symbol. Do this on the Clue Sheet as well as the map, for objects like these generally are part of interlocked

puzzles: You might need the Gold Key to enter the Crystal Cave, but have to obtain the Obsid-

G	H	I
F	A	B
E	D	C

When you need to start on a fresh sheet of paper, label it according to this scheme: If an exit goes off the right side of Map A, label the next one Map B; if it goes off the left side, call it Map F.

ian Orb before you can get the Key, which means hitching a ride on the Love Boat. Identifying all the possible links in such a chain is a major step in putting them together and making real progress.

Over the Edge

When you reach the edge of the sheet, don't tape another one to it. Instead, label the next one with the appropriate letter (according to the scheme shown above) and add a suitable name, perhaps "Inside the Mansion." Position it next to sheet "A" and draw a line connecting the locations on each map.

Now when you reenter this area from map "A" you can reach for map "B," for example, instead of awkwardly folding back part of an unwieldy map that is scotch-taped together in 47 places. This is another advantage of the QuestBusters Cartography System: You only

have to deal with one sheet of paper at a time, not a huge, folded and scotch-taped map that keeps covering the screen and falling apart. The problem with taping maps together is that the worlds of adventure are almost always too extensive for a single map, so you'll soon have to up tape another sheet to it—and another, and another—until you're found dead two weeks later, killed by a falling stack of maps containing the complete layout of *Zork*'s Great Underground Empire. If you still insist on taping the sheets together, at least stick the tape on the back of the mapping sheet. (It's almost impossible to write over the tape if it is on the front of the map.)

Upstairs, Downstairs

When an exit leads up or down, grab another sheet of paper. Beside the room's name write the name of the originating destination: "from Bottom of Stairs," for example. At the top of this sheet, name the map "B1: Upstairs in the Mansion." (By calling it B1, you are reminding yourself that it is located above or below the area on map B.) Now when you decide to go upstairs you can consult this sheet. If it turns out there are only a couple of rooms on this level, feel free to copy your findings onto the previous map if there is enough room. In that case, draw a diagonal line or write U/D beside the standard line connecting the two locations.

"Little Twisty" Mazes

Often a crucial object or information is concealed at the core of a maze, or in some dust-covered alcove hidden in the shadows of an ancient configuration of those "little twisty passages" made famous by William Crowther and Don Woods in *Original Adventure*. (Crowther was an avid spelunker—the reason mapping and caves are so common in text and graphic adventures—and based parts of Colossal Cave on maps he made of Kentucky's Mammoth Cavern for the National Parks

Service.)

Some mazes turn out to be shortcuts to otherwise inaccessible or remote areas of the fantasy world, as in *Zork I*, while many are strewn with treasures, as in *Cranston Manor*. All are treacherous, and getting lost can be deadly. The cadaverous remains of a previous adventurer, or an abandoned sack of gold coins in a narrow corridor, should set off maze-alarms in your skull. The most creative programmers turn this drudge work into a lot of fun, as Steve Meretzky did with *Sorcerer*'s clear-walled, three-dimensional maze.

Be a Litterbug

The traditional method for mapping mazes is simple, yet overlooked by beginning adventurers. Collect all the ropes, swords, pickle sandwiches— as much as you can tote at once—and drop one object in each location as you explore the maze. Devote a separate sheet to the maze, naming each room "Maze 1," " Maze 2" and so on. In the first location write the name of the object you dropped there. Now follow the first mapping method, continuing to place an object in each room.

Use a coin to keep track of your current position. When you enter a new room and find a previously dropped object, draw a line connecting the appropriate boxes before moving the coin to your new location. Devote an entire session to littering the maze and trying to make sense of the chaos, then try to retrace your path by following the trail. If you become hopelessly lost, quit the game and restart a previously saved session. (Don't give up if you get lost: Remember, Columbus might not have discovered America if he hadn't got lost on the way to the East Indies.)   Some devious programmers go out of their way to thwart adventurers who rely on this classic technique for maze-mapping. The Thief in *Zork I* will scarf up anything left lying around the maze too long. In such cases you can still use this method, but will just have

to work around their idiosyncracies by mapping a small area at a time.

The Maze They Couldn't Map

A few mazes will prove unmappable, for the only way to successfully trace the correct course will be revealed in a note or message hidden somewhere else in the game. This happens in *Dallas Quest* when you try to leave Southfork through a field in back of the house. Only by solving the puzzle of how to avoid being killed by the stampeding cattle in the pasture can you dig up the directions to the maze. Several of Sierra's early adventures relied on this device, and so did Infocom's recent *Bureaucracy*.

No! Anything but That!!

As Rand once said to McNally: Draw it again—and get it *right* this time. Because no matter how carefully you do your first map, you will often have to do it again. This usually happens when you find a new location that won't fit in the space between a couple of others. One way to avoid these situations is by skipping a box and using the next one—instead of the adjacent box—for the next location. That makes it much easier to recreate your map on a fresh sheet, since you merely have to fill in the boxes and draw the lines. And by referring to the Clue Sheet you can double-check to be sure all the objects are placed in the correct locations.

Into the Dungeons: Role-Playing Games

There are two kinds of mazes in role-playing games: aerial-view, as seen in *Phantasie*, and the first-person 3-D view seen in *Wizardry* and *Ultima*. Certain mapping principles apply to both. Always map each level on a separate sheet, with the dungeon's name and level at the top, and keep the collection of maps in a three-ring binder with tabs that permit you to quickly look up a particular maze. Orientation—the direction your party is facing—is vital, so draw an arrow on a square piece of cardboard and use this token to keep track of orientation. (This will also save lots of spell points in games with location spells.)
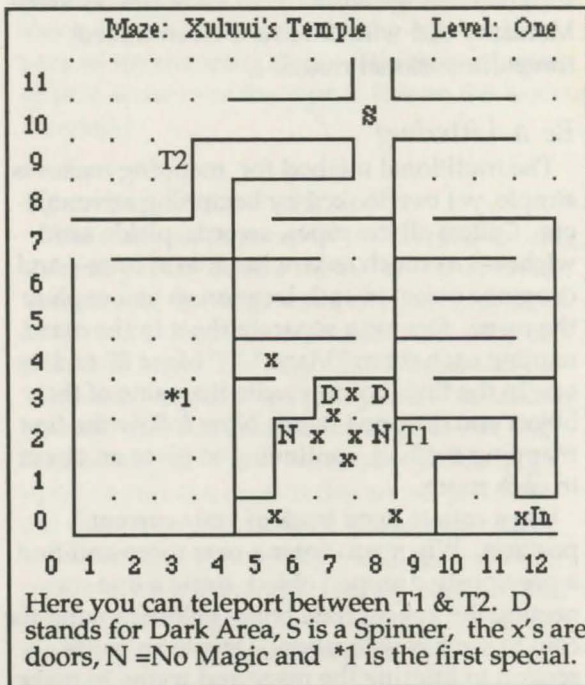
Using the Map Sheet

The QuestBusters Mapping Sheet was designed with squares larger than those on typical graph paper, so all you have to do is connect the dots to represent a wall. If you can merely walk through a wall, draw a dotted line instead of a solid one, or mark it with a D or X. When you suspect the presence of a secret door, just put a question mark beside the wall for now. Mark each wall that you kick with a special symbol, so you won't waste time rechecking the same ones for secret doors.

Symbols for the standard accoutrements of the contemporary dungeon include: T for traps, S for spinners, TE for teleporter and > for one-way doors. Feel free to devise your own symbols for these and other things you discover, such as messages, character enhancements (which increase any kind of points), dark and anti-magic squares, treasures, fixed encounters with monsters and so on. You'll find room for your code on the mapping sheet, but it is less work to put the code on a separate piece of paper. To keep track of specials, put a numbered asterisk in the square and describe it at the bottom of the page. Use *2 for the next special. Follow the same routine for messages:

M1, M2, and so on

After mapping the area around the entrance, choose one of the are three basic theories on dungeon-delving: Look for the center, then go clockwise (or counter-clockwise) around the maze; explore the main corridors; or head for a corner first. Sometimes you won't have a

Here you can teleport between T1 & T2. D stands for Dark Area, S is a Spinner, the x's are doors, N =No Magic and *1 is the first special.

choice. Either method is fine as long as you apply it systematically to avoid overlooking anything. (But in certain games, as explained below, it is better to find a corner first.) Explore the entry area thoroughly before moving further into the dungeon.

Let's Get Outa Here!

Once you have mapped the entry area and begun exploring a new region, figure out the best escape route in case you run into trouble and can't use a spell to return to the dungeon

entrance or the surface. Also determine the fastest way to get to any nearby locations that restore spell and hit points.

Lost Again...

If you do get completely lost, there are two alternatives. Your choice depends on the game. In games that don't penalize you heavily if you quit and reboot, it is usually best to do so. (This is the case with programs that allow character backups and/or have dungeons whose contents can be reset to their original state.) The other choice is to determine your position and start mapping on another sheet of paper, then play till you die or find your way back to familiar territory. Eventually you can incorporate this map with the main map of that maze.

The View from the Top

Aerial-view mazes are the easiest to map, since it is far simpler to get (and keep) your bearings from this perspective. Some games have special spells that allow you to see a wider area of the maze than just your immediate surroundings, but in most aerial-view games there is little more to do than follow the general guidelines. Any game that shows an aerial view of the countryside should be mapped in the same manner, noting cities, villages, landmarks such as mountains and rivers, and teleporters.

Three-D Mazes: Which Way Did I Go?

These are extremely disorienting, especially if you follow the standard advice of turning the paper to keep your bearings when you turn left or right. Using a token with an arrow, turning it each time the party turns, is far more effective.

Many 3-D mazes, such as *Wizardry* and *Might and Magic*, employ a grid of coordinates, numbers running along the left and bottom sides of the maze. No numbers have been included on the QuestBusters Mapping Sheets, since the coordinates vary from game to game, but room is provided for you to add them.

Magic First, Mapping Later

Look over the magic system for a spell like SCSI in *Bard's Tale*, which tells you the coordinates of your current position. If such a spell exists, don't venture into a dungeon until at least one spellcaster has learned it. (Even if there is no such spell, you should still stay in town or the countryside to build up your characters a few levels before poking your head inside a death-filled dungeon.)

Also look for spells that enable you to see hidden doors, provide light or reveal the entire maze. With the latter you can just copy the maze from the screen. Some games, such as *Moebius*, have auto-mapping features that enable you to do the same thing. Time invested in studying the game system—especially magic —before you start playing always pays off.

Finding the Corners

After exploring the entry area, your first objective in a 3-D maze should be to find a corner. Cast the location spell every few steps until you find the 0/0 coordinates, which is the lower left-hand corner. If you're closer to another corner, do the same thing until a zero clicks. This gives an idea of the maze's exact dimensions. (Watch out in *Realms of Darkness* and *Wizardry*s beyond number three, however, for their maze shapes vary in size and shape.) Base future mapping sorties from the corner.

In the Dark

Dark areas are among the hardest part of mapping a 3-D dungeon. The trick is to feel around and find a corner of the area, then move north or south, east or west, constantly checking for other corners, until you have mapped the boundaries of the dark area. Put a dot in each square you learn is safe, so you won't retrace

your steps, and of course, indicate traps and other features with the appropriate codes.

Once you've determined the perimeters of the dark area, start at a bottom corner and march across it horizontally to the far wall, then move up one square and march back across, moving to the top wall in the manner. (It may be more convenient to do this vertically, of course.) After mapping the interior, check each wall panel for doors by kicking them. You can return and explore any secret exits later on, unless you can't leave the way you came in.

Teleporters and Spinners

When the screen flickers after you enter a square, you have just discovered one of the two most devious things used by game designers to thwart your mapping efforts—a teleporter or a spinner. Fortunately both are most commonly seen in games that employ a grid system, so immediately cast a spell when this happens. If your position is one square away from your previous position, it's a spinner. Otherwise you have stepped on a teleporter, which can be as useful as they are frustrating.

When you find a teleporter, mark it with a T1 on the map and put a T2 at its destination to show you can port between these two. Use T3 and T4 for the next set. If it's a one-way or random teleport, mark it T* and put explanatory information at the bottom of the sheet. In most games teleporters are vital for reaching locations behind impassable stone walls. They can also save time when you don't have enough spell points to teleport to the dungeon's exit. Welcome the discovery of each teleporter—learn to use them instead of being confused by them.

The Endless Hall

Teleporters are often employed to dupe you into walking 40,000 squares in an endless loop.

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When you exit one side of a maze, the teleporter simply transports you to the same coordinate at the opposite side. Whenever you go more than 20 squares in the same direction and the hall still looks endless, cast a spell to find your location. Then find the border where the coordinates cycle back to zero. In *Wizardry*, for example, if you stand at 10East, 19North and go north, you arrive at the 10East, 0North. In most cases that means you have also discovered one of the maze's boundaries.

I'm Getting Dizzy

Spinners, the revolving doors of the dungeon world, are another trouble spot. Just pass a turn by punching the space bar or return key. This usually triggers another spin, and by doing this a few times you can find how many halls can be reached from the spinner. Finally, exit through one and cast a spell to find your position and heading. Then step back onto the spinner and do it again for the other positions.

Keeping It Organized

Keep your maps in a three-ring binder so you can quickly find the right one. Use the Character Sheets to keep track of each party member's attributes, possesions, spells and so on. Remember, managing information is one of the keys to a successful quest.