Project Torque Explained

The unofficial guide to Project Torque

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Written by MadMax

Preface

So here it is, the unofficial game guide to Project Torque. Why did I write it? I guess if you have found this document on the web, you may have realized already that there are a lot of tutorials, FAQs and "guides" on the game's website and especially in the community forums – but there is no complete documentation anywhere, not even an official one by Aeria Games. The few steps they outline on the website are not enough to explain the whole concept of this game, resulting in lots of questions being asked over and over by new players in the forums. Some people kept asking for a manual to Project Torque so they could get themselves up to speed, but the only thing close to a manual so far was the Project Torque Wiki, another single-page tutorial which quickly answers the most important questions. But when it comes down to all the important details of which Project Torque features a lot, information is sparse and difficult to find. Every aspect has been discussed somewhere in the forums at some point in time. Good luck hunting!

When I started playing, it took me a while to grasp the concept of the game. The first thing I did was set up the controls and graphics, and go out on Broadways #1 in Practice mode. I had a lot of fun discovering the physics of the car, enjoying the beautiful scenery and trying to get a clean lap done. Afterwards, I started playing the Career (it used to be free at that time, no keys were required). I still had a weird feeling that Project Torque was going in the right direction with its driving model and its graphics, but the Career itself was casual fun at best. It was challenging and rewarded me with important points that let me level up, I got to drive other cars and many tracks. It still felt not as awesome as some other games, though – the AI racers were predictable, often you had to go on a checkpoint hunt, and the overall style of the menus and the story in the Career looked unfinished. But I kept playing, and one day I went online for the first time.

Project Torque is all about the online races, that's what I figured very quickly after I had started them. Meeting other people, racing with them, gaining points, leveling up, taking license tests, buying new cars… it feels like your personal street racing career. This is what makes this game so addicting and gives it flair that even the unfinished design cannot take away. I played every day and tried to find out every aspect it had to offer… what was it with the Mission Bonus Keys? What exactly happened in a room? Why could I not join a race on a specific track? How to upgrade my car? What does the steering range setting do? Why can't I buy a gift with Race Points?
All these questions were answered by helpful forum topics and by myself. When I could not find information about something, I started experimenting in the game to find out how things worked. Everything I learned in this time made me realize that Project Torque has so many facets and features that it absolutely needs a clean and organized documentation. It must be frustrating for new players not to know things, and not everyone has the time and patience to research information.

This guide is the work of many days spent with the game and even more days spent with Microsoft Word. Writing it was a lot of fun as it forced me to create a concept after which I put all the knowledge together that I had collected. It made me think some things over and helped me find out others, and now that it is done, I feel like I know everything there is to know about this game, which gives me a great sense of security and comfort. Until the next big update, that is. Then I will have to start learning again like every other player facing the wacky new things that Invictus came up with. The guide will be updated to include the new information whenever this happens, so once you have played a new version of Project Torque for a few days, you might start looking for a new link to this document in the forums.

I hope that everyone, newbie or expert, enjoys this work of words. I also hope that I have written it clearly enough for everyone to understand (English is not my native language). Of course I am always open to suggestions, so write e-mails, private messages, or forum topics. My name is MadMax1998 both in-game and in the forums.

Thanks to the great community for providing a lot of information that has been included here. Let's race!

- MadMax on October 20, 2008
 madmax1998@gmail.com

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Part A:

Introduction to Project Torque

Welcome to Project Torque! This chapter will explain the game's features and what you need to get started.

1. What is Project Torque?

Project Torque is a racing game like no other. Forget street racing arcade games, hardcore driving simulations, and NASCAR™ racing games… this game has all of that, and a lot more! Project Torque combines arcade and simulation racing, drifting, drag racing, high speed oval endurance races, fun modes, and takes all of that online for the best massively multiplayer racing experience yet. And best of all: it is *free* to play!

1.1. Massively Multiplayer Online Racing

Massively Multiplayer Online Games, or MMOGs for short, have become very popular with many players in the past few years. Regardless of the genre, be it roleplaying games, action games, or racing games, they all have one thing in common: a large community consisting of thousands of players all enjoying the game on the same server, meeting each other and playing together. Also, many of these games make it worthwhile to play them by rewarding players with higher "levels", which unlock items like new game worlds, skills, bonuses, parts to buy in shops etc. Long-time players can look back at their career and what they achieved in the hours they spent on the game.
Project Torque works just the same way: it allows players to level up with successful racing, unlocking maps, tracks, cars and parts to buy in the shop, and whole game modes and race types. At the same time, racing online against hundreds of other players produces a new experience with every race, and the helpful community can aid you in becoming a better racer.

1.2. Game Modes

Project Torque offers lots of different racing styles (see *Part C: Game Modes*). All of these styles can be played in the following modes, both online and offline:

Online Racing: VS Match – this mode is the core component of Project Torque, where players go head to head over the Internet in all available race types, like simulation or arcade racing, drift and drag events, or the popular Thunder Alley races.

Practice Session – allows players to get used to new cars and tracks on their own, without any bonuses but also with no penalties.

Missions – from the Career, which encompasses volumes of challenges and rewards the player with points for completion, to Tasks and Driving Challenges which can be completed on their own, missions offer quick and exciting single player events to get points in Project Torque.

License Test – not really a game mode, it still challenges players who want to level up in regular intervals. For example, to get from level 5 to level 6, a license test must be completed to prove that the player is worthy to continue the game. This helps keep spammers and incapable drivers away from the higher-ranked online modes, resulting in cleaner racing.

Test Drive – the shop and garage both offer test drive sessions, where you can freely roam around selected maps with one of your own cars to test tuning, or check out cars you might want to buy!

1.3. Cars

Cars in Project Torque are divided into classes. The game features fantasy cars often modeled after real-world cars, as well as a number of licensed reproductions. Cars come with either front wheel, rear wheel or four wheel drive, and can often be tuned visually as well as for performance.

Most cars in Project Torque are street cars, meaning that you can expect familiar driving behavior. For example, the steering range in Project Torque is a full 900 degrees double-and-a-half circle, and drifting a car is similar to real-world street drifting. These cars have a yellow class sticker in the menu interface. There are also some offroaders like buggies and SUVs. These are meant to be raced on offroad courses and have an army-green class sticker saying "offroad". Cars that are raced on Thunder Alley have a black sticker saying "race", and the recently added drift-only cars have yet another class sticker in red, saying "drift". Every class sticker also has three dots on the right side, indicating what "tier" the car is in – a class 2 sticker with three filled dots means "class 2 tier 3" and is greater than tier 2 or 1.

The game features no GT or touring cars, no open wheelers except for the Thunder Alley Rookie car, and no prototypes. All the offroad, race and drift cars are based on street or sport vehicles.

Here is a quick rundown of the seven car classes:

Class 1   Includes the fantasy "starter" street cars Corus S3, Miato Wizz, Lion Executive Sedan and Kawana K-660, as well as the licensed Toyota Corolla GT-S. Low power, good handling, light weight. The Corolla is said to be a classic drifter, although its simulated handling in Project Torque is somewhat oversensitive. The only class 1 drift car is the Hexan GT "HPE", a drift version of the class 2 street car Hexan GT. An offroad vehicle that is given free to every player after the first license test is the C-Racer, a small SUV that can be tuned nicely.

Class 2   Featuring only four street cars, this class includes the fantasy rides Hexan GT, Quadro SF-6 and Corall Spire GTI as well as the licensed Toyota 2000 GT. Slightly higher power, more difficult to drive. Complementing the drift section of this class is the licensed Mazda RX-7 Spirit R "Sniper", almost a carbon copy of Keisuke Takahashi's FD from the anime series *Initial D*.

Class 3   This class was once reserved for the Thunder Alley race cars, extremely powerful speed monsters intended to be raced only on the oval high speed Thunder Alley track. Currently the only street car in class 3 is the licensed Mazda RX-7 GT (FC). Drift cars include the fantasy Stallion GT "Falcon" and "Toxico" models, two drift alternatives of the class 4 Stallion street car.

Class 4   With two Japanese sports cars and two American muscle cars, this class is the first step into fast racing territory. Includes the licensed Mazda RX-8 and Toyota MR2 GT-S as well as the fantasy cars Stallion and Phoenix, two muscle cars from two generations whose real-world counterparts can easily be identified. The offroad section is represented by the licensed Hummer H3, the fantasy SUV Lagoon Destroyer and the Ranger 4x4. This class features performance cars that can be drifted and tuned well.

Class 5   Featuring more licensed cars than any other class, this stage includes the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX, the Mazda RX-7 Spirit R and the Subaru Impreza WRX. Fantasy street cars include the Harpoon GT and Spiedo Forte. The range of offroad cars is pretty with the fantasy Buggy Evo II and the licensed Toyota 4Runner Sport as well as the Mitsubishi Outlander. A "class of its own", class 5 bridges the gap between the popular power class 4 and the high-end class 6.

Class 6   Features the new licensed Chevrolet Camaro Concept, the popular Corvette C6 and a fantasy "companion" car, the Panama GT, which is instantly recognizable from its real-world idol. Class 6 cars drive fast, require skillful driving, and are notorious for winning races against lower class cars in online events without restrictions. On their own, class 6 races are a test of any player's racing skills.

Class 7   This newly introduced class surpasses even the raw performance of the class 6 cars, which used to be the top of the line before. Currently the fantasy sports car Morello S-Type is the only vehicle to claim the class 7 title. It features 411 HP at stock and goes up to 317 km/h while steering like a toy R/C car. Although it is far from its real-world counterpart, the Morello is definitely the Alpha and Omega in Project Torque.

1.4. Tracks

Project Torque features a wild variety of tracks which appear in a handful of environments. This map-and-track system allows for many different race courses in the same surroundings. For example, Tokyo offers short circuits, medium "broadway" tracks and long, fast and slow "city tour" courses. Other environments (maps) can have long and short versions on the same roads, or tracks in completely different areas. Tracks can be either lap-based or from point A to point B. The Explorer race type (see *Part C, 2.6. Explorer*) features no distinct track and allows players to drive around the whole environment.

The following environments are available over time in Project Torque:

Tokyo

The buzzing capital of Japan is quite empty here, but the broad and narrow streets, parking lots and sidewalks make excellent street racing locations! The map features a great variety of tracks, from the short and simple "Around the Block" to the epic "City Tour #2", which goes around the whole area at high speeds. Tokyo is very well crafted with detailed buildings and skyscrapers, streetlights, bridges and tunnels. There are even separate tracks in regions that cannot otherwise be reached, like "Tokyo Underground", which moves a lot through the tunnels under the streets.

England

The complete opposite of Tokyo, the England area offers speedy and relaxing laps around the wonderful British countryside, featuring lots of trackside objects such as balloons, trains, a church, garden houses and the wide open corn fields on the start/finish straight. A beautiful red double-winged airplane trails its rounds above the track and can often be seen flying at low altitude over the fields.

Serpentine

This French mountain pass requires great driving skills and cars with good corner grip or great drifting abilities. Any track available here features corners with lots of steering and braking work coming up on players. The steep elevation requires extra strong brakes and acceleration if you want to beat the world record. Do not be afraid to try Serpentine, though, as it is probably the most photorealistic and atmospheric map in Project Torque, and many other racing games could look up to that!

Circuit

Away from road and street racing, this German fantasy racing circuit delivers everything professional racing fans could want. The circuit itself is a pretty long and curvy track that can be completed as a lap, but there are alternate paths laid out in between the track that allow for directional and layout changes. This map offers a few tracks that take care of all racing styles – from high speed to controlled cornering to drifting.

Mud

The only true offroad racing map in Project Torque, but it offers all the fun an offroad fan could want. Not only that, but there are also rally-inspired dirt and concrete tracks here, some of which go uphill so far that you can jump off at the end and make your car fly like a stunt driver! The various ramps all over the place also make stunt jumping further possible. This map is especially great in Explorer because the points and prizes are

scattered everywhere you could imagine, and sometimes you have to jump just to catch the last one!

Hangar

This is in fact not a real racing track, but as the name suggests, it is a military airplane hangar made of two buildings with a small open space between them. You go around the area in a circle – that's right, you need to steer all the way in one direction at all times, but you have to go straight for a second once in a while to correct your course, and getting around the "corners" is difficult. The hangar is a lot of fun if you like to ram stuff because there are boxes and crates everywhere that you can plow through.

Construction Zone

Not so much an area with real tracks, but more like an open sandbox in the sense of the word. This map is full of construction machinery and material, including steel beams,

concrete columns, waste trunks, mobile toilets, wood stacks, crates, fences and rails. Plus there is a two-floor raw building in the center which you can jump up on to drive on the concrete. While racing on this map is somewhat chaotic, it is fun. Of course Explorer and Capture the Flag are even better!

Tokyo Highway

The only purpose of the highway is to drive fast and the one with the best shifting, car control, top speed and nitro boost wins! "Wangan Race" is the name of this very long drag strip, which features exactly two real curves and these are too wide and open to be called corners. Mastering Wangan is no difficult feat – just hit the gas and stay on the road! Winning Wangan requires a fast car, tuned or otherwise boosted, and manual shifting might help set yourself apart from other racers after the green flag drops.

California Raceway

Similar to Circuit, this raceway is a long track which is set up in different layouts to shape different race courses. Apart from the sunny looks of the environment around the track and the somewhat flat bystanders watching the race, it is an ordinary circuit which is so tight that it feels more like a drift track than a real racing circuit.

San Francisco Marina
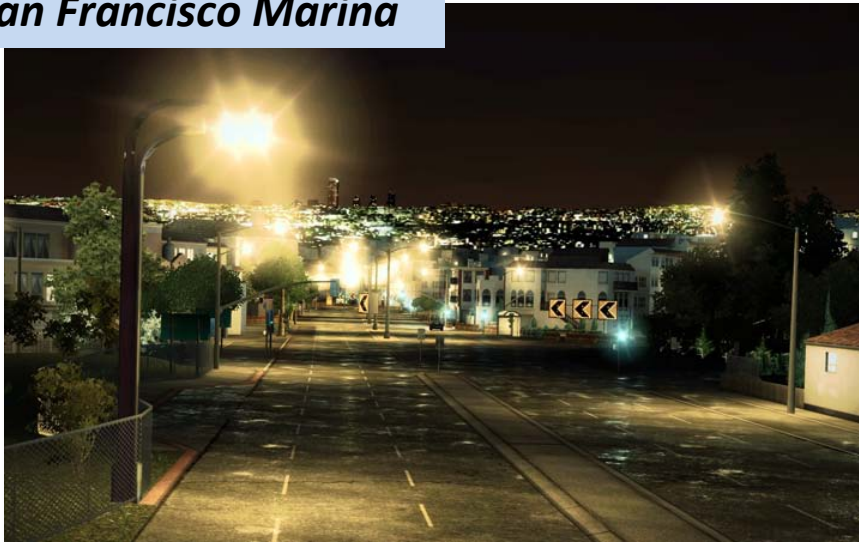
The very first map you will come in contact with once you start playing Project Torque, although it is locked until later and cannot be raced on instantly. This map creates a very nice U.S. street racing flair with tight 90 degree corners between flat buildings, a nightly harbor straight and some shortcuts through the green. The two tracks are not particularly difficult, but there is lots of stuff to crash into and drag along, so mastering this map can take a while.

Tanzawa

If you like *Initial D* or downhill drifting in general, Tanzawa is for you! This map features a mountain road that goes either uphill or downhill depending on the direction you go, so there are two tracks here. This is the classic "touge" road in Japanese street racing style.

Shanghai Rooftop
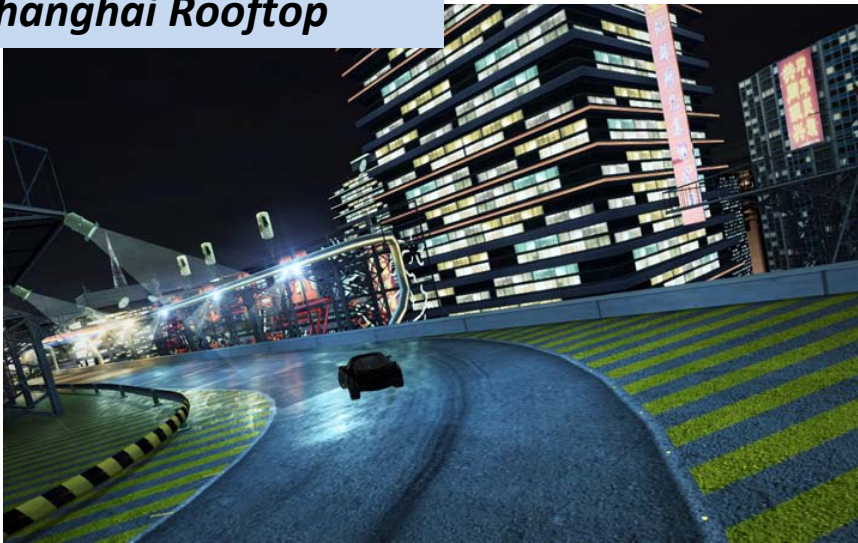
A map only available in the Drift race type which features one track with very nasty corners. Perfect for show drifting, which is what Drift mode is all about. And a nice scenery too!

Python Creek

The most recently added map. While only available in Explorer and Capture the Flag games so far, this map is all but a real track – it is offroad heaven come true for players who want to jump through the sand between a huge canyon! It features all kinds of eye candy: pipes to drive through, cans to kick around, rocks, hills and valleys, a riverbed and even a dam!

Sunbay Speedway
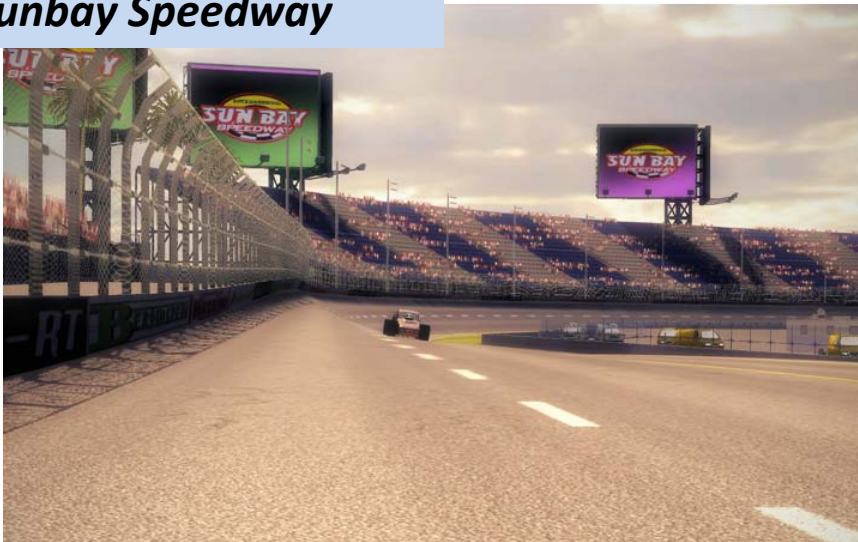
The Thunder Alley oval track which is not really an oval, but more like a very round triangle. It has everything you might know from NASCAR™ and IndyCar races – banked corners, long straights, high speeds and a long way to go with races that can run up to 60 laps! This track is only driven in the Thunder Alley race type with the three class 3 Thunder Alley cars.

License Test

This map is not a racing track, but it can be used to test drive cars on. When test driving, the map is completely empty, meaning there are no cones or barriers set up like in license tests, which this map is used for. Makes for a great practice track for drifting newbies, as the big empty space you start on can be used to practice e-brake drifting before you try to corner the various track strips.

One very cool feature of Project Torque is that most of these maps can be raced at different daytimes or seasons. For example, Tokyo can be raced during spring, summer, autumn and winter daytime – or at night during summer! So if you like to flash your headlights and get the street racing atmosphere on, this is the way to go. Other maps like San Francisco cannot be driven at other times or seasons, and some maps display winter different from others – the best example of a snowy winter track is the "Cold Winter" setup on any England track.

1.5. Feature List

Content Features

- Map-and-track system
- Different daytime and season track graphics
- Over 30 licensed and fantasy street, offroad, race and drift cars
- Single player and multiplayer game modes
- Race types that cover a variety of arcade and simulation racing
- Level and points system
- Shop with cars and parts
- License tests

Technical Features

- Scalable graphics engine optimized for medium-range and high-end systems
- DirectX 9 based graphics with DirectX 8 fallback option
- Image quality optimizers: anti-alias, post processing, HDR lighting
- FMOD audio system
- Support for mouse, keyboard, gamepads and steering wheels
- Support for clutch pedals and H-shifters
- Force feedback and vibration
- Support for TrackIR
- Online racing with 2 to 20 players
- In-game chat with voice and text macros
- Map voting system
- Central game servers to host all running games
- Online race type channels
- Dynamic room hosting

2. System Requirements

Project Torque runs on many PCs, but like any computer game, it has some minimum requirements that your machine must meet in order to run and enjoy the game.

Note: Project Torque is a PC-only game and will not run on Macs unless your Mac is Intel-based and you have Windows installed. Currently Microsoft Windows is the only operating system supported and it is not clear whether there will be a Linux port later on.

2.1. Required System Specs

From the Project Torque website:

Operating system: Windows XP or Vista (32 bits *)
Processor: 2000 MHz (AMD: 2000)
Memory: 512 MB
Graphics card: DirectX 8 compatible card or onboard chip
Sound card: DirectX compatible card or onboard chip

* Author's note: I am successfully running Project Torque on Windows Vista Home Premium, 64 bit edition! So do not worry if you have a 64 bit system, the game will run fine provided you have all the necessary hardware drivers.

Project Torque requires DirectX 9.0c to run, so install that if you have not done so. It can be found on www.microsoft.com/directx

2.2. Recommended System Specs

The official recommendation from the game's website is somewhat slim:

Processor: 2500 MHz (AMD: 2500)
Memory: 1 GB
Graphics card: DirectX 9 compatible card
Input: analog input device

Personally, I think what is important to note here is that not every DirectX 9 graphics card can run Project Torque as it should be. Outdated Nvidia GeForce FX (5 series) cards were the first DirectX 9 cards, but they might have a hard time displaying all the eye candy the game offers. That is not to say that it will not run! But from personal experience, I would recommend a good GeForce 6 or 7 series card (6800 GT / 7800 or greater) or an ATI equivalent. One of my friends reports that his GeForce 8800 GT runs the game at maxed out details in 1680x1050 without any hiccups. On my system (GeForce 7800 GT) I have to turn down the anti-aliasing to low and also reduce the detail of opponent cars to get a truly fluent experience, but everything else is up to 100%.

In terms of processor and memory recommendations, the official ones are probably enough to run the game at full detail and you will hardly notice a difference with more of both. Keep in mind though that Windows Vista requires a dual-core processor and 2 GB of RAM to run games as fast as XP.

2.3. Will the Game Run On My PC?

This is a list of common computer configurations to reference your system with. Compare your PC's specs to these and find the ones that best match your machine, and you will know what to expect.

Office PC: fast processor (dual core), 1 GB of RAM, on-board graphics chip, on-board sound chip
This system can run Project Torque just fine if the on-board graphics chip is a GeForce 7 series chip or greater. However, often on-board chips use system memory as video memory, reducing the 1 GB of RAM to approx. 768 MB. If your graphics chip is an Intel or equivalent non-gaming chip, upgrade your machine with a graphics card as mentioned above.

Home multimedia PC (new): fast processor (dual core), 2 GB of RAM, medium-range 3D graphics card, on-board sound chip
This system is most likely ready to run Project Torque at high detail out of the box. Any new (as in not older than 12 months) multimedia computer is ready for the medium-range graphics of many games and has only a little trouble with high-end graphics. Maybe anti-aliasing quality and screen resolution will have to be kept at medium levels.

Home multimedia PC (older): slower processor (single core), 512 MB of RAM, older 3D graphics card, on-board sound chip
This system will probably meet the requirements of Project Torque out of the box, but due to the reduced memory and the older graphics card, the game may need performance tweaking. Turning off image quality enhancements like anti-aliasing and HDR lighting as well as reducing the screen resolution may help, but also keeping the texture and world detail at medium can increase performance while still providing an enjoyable gaming experience.

Gaming PC (new): fast processor (dual or quad core), 2 or 4 GB of RAM, high-end 3D graphics card, quality sound card
With this system, you can most likely run Project Torque at maximum detail and resolution! Start by turning up everything to the max and then play some races, and if performance is steady and fast, just keep your settings. If anything needs to be tweaked here, it might be the opponent vehicle detail as races with up to 20 cars can reduce performance even on higher-end systems.

Gaming PC (older): fast processor (single or dual core), 1 GB of RAM, medium-range 3D graphics card, older sound card or on-board chip
Practically meets the performance of a new multimedia PC, except for the somewhat smaller memory. 1 GB is still the recommended amount of RAM for Project Torque, so there should be no problems running the game.

Laptop (new): fast processor (dual core), 1 or 2 GB of RAM, on-board graphics chip, on-board sound chip
Laptops are a mixed bag: unless it is a gaming laptop, in which case you do not have to worry, the graphics chip is the bottleneck in most cases. If it is an Intel or similar office work chip, Project Torque will not work. If the laptop has an ATI or Nvidia sticker on it and is not older than 12 months, the game will work and probably display a decent framerate, but some quality enhancements like anti-aliasing might need to be turned off, especially considering the high screen resolution that you will want to run the game at to meet the display's fixed resolution.

Laptop (older): slower processor (single core), 512 MB of RAM, on-board graphics chip, on-board sound chip
Meets the performance of an older multimedia PC, but the graphics chip is again the bottleneck. Unless the laptop has an ATI or Nvidia sticker on it, the game will probably not work, and if there is a quality graphics chip inside, it is probably only lower-end range and you might need to fall back to DirectX 8 graphics in Project Torque as well as reduce the resolution and image quality.

2.4. Internet Connection Requirements

Project Torque requires a broadband Internet connection. There is no way around this, ISDN and dial-up users are simply out. This ensures fast and clean racing with a minimum of dropouts, fake lap times, car crashes etc.

Aeria does not recommend a specific connection speed, they only have ADSL/Cable printed on the website. So any broadband connection will work, be it cable with a static IP address or ADSL with dynamic IPs and the usual 24 hour connection reset. Of course the higher your bandwidth, the less likely it is that the game will lag because of a high player count, long distance to the game server, or because you are downloading/uploading something while playing. To keep the connection as stable as possible and open your whole bandwidth to the game, downloading or uploading should be minimized or avoided altogether while you play.

Thanks to the server-based dynamic room hosting (see *3.5. Dynamic Room Hosting*), hardware firewalls in routers or closed ports should not pose a problem in Project Torque as there are no incoming connections from other players when they join a room you created. However, it may happen that your router or software firewall blocks the connection to the game server. In that case, open ports 12321 through 12329 (for routers) or create a rule to let the game pass the firewall (for software).

3. How the Aeria Games Network Works

In this part you will learn what Aeria's games are all about: how they work, what "free to play" really means, and what happens with your user ID after you registered.

3.1. What Aeria Offers

Aeria Games is a U.S.-based game publisher that has only started to expand to the worldwide online gaming market. Just recently, the company decided to open their official European headquarters in Berlin, Germany ([source](#)), which happens to be my hometown! Aeria offers the technical base to publish and run worldwide MMOGs which, unless otherwise noted, are all "free to play", a slogan which attracts many players who are not interested in paying a monthly fee to play other commercial MMOGs. The games offered by Aeria are developed by international game studios: Project Torque is developed by Hungarian studio Invictus, which also explains the somewhat amusing way the English text in the game is written. Another recent game offered by Aeria, the tennis game Gold Slam, is developed by a Korean studio. All that Aeria does is publish and host the games, provide community portals and get feedback from users back to the developers. In other words, Aeria do the business while the game studios do the programming.

3.2. "Free to Play", Race Points, and Aeria Points

"Free to play" is colorfully printed all over Aeria's game websites, and it is true: registering an account and playing a game is totally free. However, Aeria would not exist if they did not have a way to make money from their business model. The company does this in two ways: through advertising (on websites, in the game client launcher window, and in-game) and through micro-transactions that are optionally available to every player.

Lots of the content in Aeria's games must be purchased in shops, like cars and parts in Project Torque. Much of this content can be "virtually" purchased through game points, which have different names in every game – in Project Torque, these game points are called "Race Points" (RP). Earning them only requires you to be successful in the game, for example winning a race. But it is a long way to save up that many Race Points to buy a car, and thus players can always purchase (this time for real) so-called "Aeria Points" (AP) from Aeria Games itself and then invest these Aeria Points in game content just like Race Points.

To make matters more interesting, quite a bit of content can be bought with Aeria Points *only*. This content is often not required to progress in a game, but cool and worth the money to many players. In Project Torque, every licensed car is an "AP-only" item and cannot be bought with Race Points. The reason is simple: licensing cars for video games costs money as the car manufacturers want to be paid for the name and the car's specs to appear in the game, and Aeria gets some of that money back by selling these cars with Aeria Points.

There is no reason to be afraid of hidden costs, though – playing a game published by Aeria costs absolutely nothing, and buying Aeria Points is always optional. There is no credit card, PayPal account or bank account information required when you register.

3.3. How User IDs Work in Aeria's Games

Before you can play any Aeria game, you first have to register with the company and create a user profile with a unique ID. This ID is a name that you can freely choose as long as it is not already in use by someone else: it works just like user names in forums or e-mail addresses. A password must also be defined so that you can log into an Aeria game with the ID and the password.

No matter what you do in a game, whether you play online against others or practice in single player mode, all of the information about your progress is not stored locally on your computer, but on an Aeria server and tied to your user ID. This is the reason why you cannot even start a game before you have registered with Aeria. The cool thing about this is that you can continue playing your game from any computer in the world which has the game client installed! No need to back up saved games and take them with you to another PC, just log in to the game with your ID and everything is like it was at home. This makes it especially easy to play Aeria games on several computers, like on your home PC and at work, or at a wireless hotspot using your laptop.

As mentioned above, user IDs do not store any information relevant to financial transactions. Also, no private information (like your address) is required. And most importantly: with one user ID, you can play *all* the games Aeria offers!

3.4. Game Servers

Aeria maintains the servers required to run an MMOG and hosts all of the online content and multiplayer game mechanics there. As previously mentioned, players' progress is also saved on a game server. Before you can play a game, you must connect to a game server; often there is more than one to compensate for the high player amount. The game server also hosts all the matches being played. Not a single race in Project Torque is hosted locally on your computer, or by another player – everything is centralized on the Aeria game server. This also allows for dynamic room hosting.

3.5. Dynamic Room Hosting

"Dynamic room hosting" is a term I came up with during the writing of this guide. I am not aware of any other name used by Aeria and in fact, I figured this technology out by myself while playing Project Torque. It may or may not be used under a different name in

other MMOGs, so I take no responsibility here for correctness! But anyway, dynamic room hosting in Aeria games allows any player to host a match, a player vs. player game – a "room" as it is called here, where these players gather and get ready to start the match, and then get it on. In Project Torque, this room is displayed as a parking lot with the players' cars gathering in a circle before they go on the track to race.

The room hosting is dynamic because when the host leaves the room, it will not dissolve and throw all other players out, but instead the player second on the user list will become the host. This player now has full control over the rules of the next race. In other words, the hosting task of the room is passed on from the first player to the second when the first player leaves, kind of like saying, "I have to go now, you keep the party going". This is possible because none of the rooms are hosted on a player's computer, but always on the game server.

4. Registration, Installation and Updating

Now that you know what Aeria Games is like and what to expect from Project Torque, I hope that you want to check out the game yourself! So have at it with the following simple steps.

4.1. Downloading the Project Torque Client
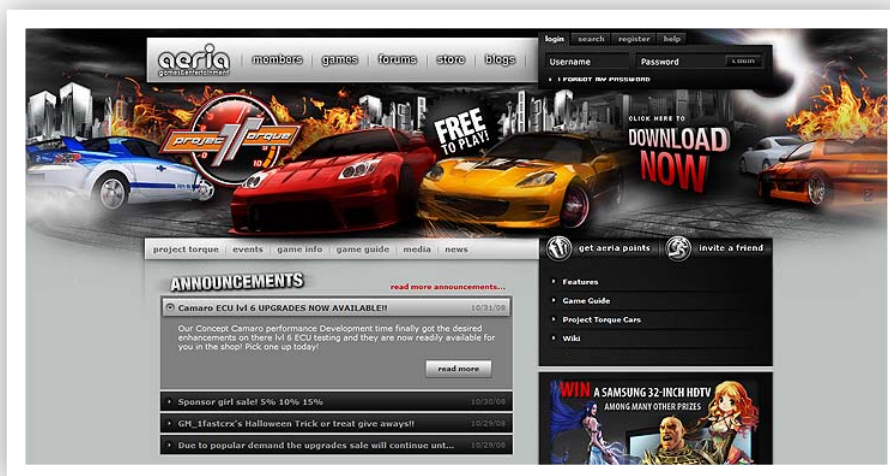
Either by googling "Project Torque" or by following this link, go to the official Project Torque website and download the game client. The current client is called Diane and features all the things I mention in this guide, but the client is updated more or less regularly with small and bigger, technical and content updates. And once in a while a

new version of the client with a new name will come out – the next client version is said to be called Eleanor.

4.2. Installing the Client

Install the client by opening the setup package you downloaded. Installation is fairly straightforward and only requires a few clicks. Once the client is successfully installed, you might start it up already even if you have not yet registered: the game launcher will search for and find a few updates it needs to download and install before you can start the game. This update process can take a while, so use this time to register with Aeria Games.
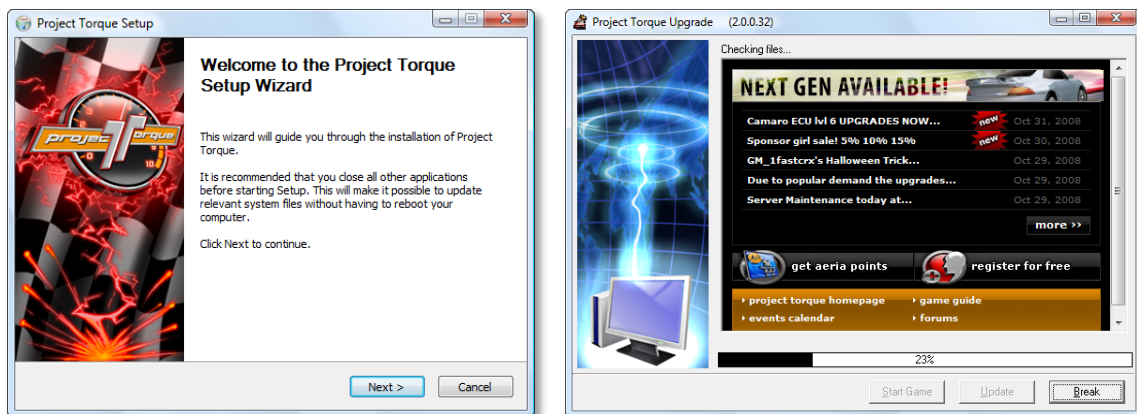
4.3. Registering With Aeria Games

On the Project Torque website, click on "register", the option at the top right next to the "login" tab. This will bring you to the account creation page where you now have to define your personal user ID. This can be any name you can think of as long as this name is not already in use by another player – if this is the case, the website will notify you once you try to complete registration. Below the user ID field you have to enter and confirm your valid e-mail address. It will be used to send an activation e-mail to you later and of course you will be informed of upcoming Aeria games and events by e-mail. Since Aeria often announces open beta tests of new games which can win you some Aeria Points, it is a good idea not to trash or spam filter these mails!

All that is left to input now is your date of birth, your city and your country (to identify your global location as a player and optimize connections). You may enter your full name, but it is not required. Lastly, you have to agree to the license terms and copy the letter and number sequence printed on the picture at the bottom of the page to identify yourself as a human person.

Hit "Create Account" and see what happens. You will be notified that you need to check your e-mail inbox for the activation message Aeria sends to you (also check your spam box to make sure you do not miss the message). In this message there is a link you must click on to confirm the activation of your new account. After you have completed this step, the last thing you have to do is create a password to log in with, along with your user ID. For security reasons, the password must at least be eight characters long and include at least one uppercase and one lowercase letter as well as a number. So a password like "catfish" will not work, but "CatFish13" will.

4.4. Automatic Client Updates

Once you have finished registering, you can now start Project Torque and log in with your user ID and your password. Before that, the game launcher will complete any updates it has detected on start. These updates always come automatically and must be installed before you can start the game because all players need to run the exact same client to be fully compatible with each other when playing. This is also the reason why the rather long update process after client installation is required and cannot be paused or circumvented to start the game early. You just have to wait a bit, but believe me, you will not regret it!

Part B:

First Launch and Menu Setup

So you have loaded the client, got the updates and registered with Aeria Games? Are you ready to race? If you have an analog controller of some kind, like a gamepad with sticks or a steering wheel… shelve it for now as you will not be able to use it right away. But we will get to that later!

1. Starting Up Project Torque

1.1. Launching the Client and Logging In

Run the client and click on "Start Game". After displaying the Project Torque logo for a few seconds, the screen will go black and display the intro video. Enjoy it, or hit Escape to cancel and get to the login page. Enter your user ID and your password, and check the box to let the game save your ID so that you will not have to enter it every time you launch the game. You will have to input your password every time, though!

If the game responds with the message "unable to log in, please try again later" or something similar, you have just been lucky enough to hit the small time window of server maintenance. The servers are closed to players while they are maintained, but it will not take longer than an hour at maximum, so come back later and try again as the game suggests. This has happened to me only once so far.

If the game displays another message, for example "unable to log in, please check your Internet connection", you have either lost your broadband connection or the game has been sitting at the login screen for too long – this has happened to me three times, and in every case simply restarting the game has worked.

1.2. Server Selection
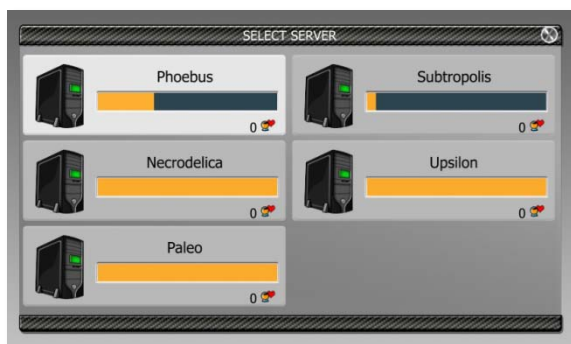
As explained farther above, the whole game is run on a game server belonging to Aeria Games, and in Project Torque there are five of those. Currently the player load is not high enough to fill all five servers, so there are only two of them open and the second, Subtropolis, is more of a backup for the first, Phoebus, the one where most players gather to play. Subtropolis often has some players on it, but there is not much going on there – so if you want to host a private race for your friends, this place might be quiet enough to "keep others out", but if you want to challenge other players from the Project Torque community, select Phoebus.

On the selection screen, you will see little friend symbols (users with hearts) on every server button and a number next to them telling you whether there are any friends of yours on this server. If you have made friends later, you can see on which server they are and join them.

The game will now take a few seconds to connect to the server, and no matter what seems to be happening – and even if the game seems to be frozen – just sit back and wait for it to connect, because two things *will* happen: one, you get connected and see the main menu, or two, the game takes you back to the login page. Please refrain from shutting down Project Torque just because it sits at the connection screen for a while; connecting takes a bit and the established connection is very stable in turn.

1.3. Creating a Nickname

At some point after logging in, the game will ask you to choose a nickname to display your avatar with in the game. Like in any other multiplayer game, players have avatars (cars or drivers representing them) and nicknames displayed above them, so that you know who you are dealing with. The nickname is often the user ID, but in Project Torque it can be a different name.
The game now requires you to enter your desired nickname, and then checks whether this name is already in use by another player. If not, the new nickname will be used from now on – and it cannot be changed except by buying an item called "nickname changer" in the shop. If you cannot think of another name to give yourself, it is absolutely okay to type in your user ID and use it as the nickname, however the game will warn you that for security reasons, this is not recommended.

From topics in the Project Torque community forums I know that older versions of the client did not even allow a different nickname; you had to use your user ID in-game, so I am sure that it is not dangerous to do so now. Otherwise you have to come up with two names, one for your ID and one for the game, and both of these should not be in use by someone else, and this can get tedious. Personally, I stayed with my user ID as my nickname, which also makes things more transparent when you start posting in the forums or playing other games.

2. The Tutorial

After you connected to the game server, the first thing you will go through is the tutorial. This will happen before you even get to the main menu, and this is also why you cannot use an analog controller at this time: the game has keyboard control configured by default and requires you to use it for the tutorial. However, there are two things you can do: cancel and repeat the tutorial later which allows you to get to the main menu, or hit

Escape and go into the options menu to remap the controls, and continue the tutorial with your controller.

2.1. What the Tutorial Does
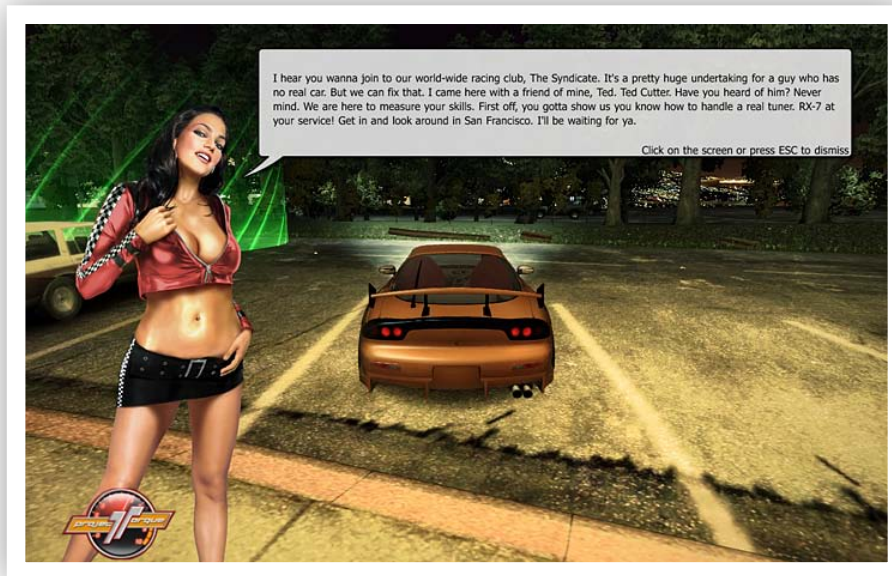
The tutorial is not so much a true guide through the game, but more an introduction to driving in Project Torque. The game gives you an orange Mazda RX-7 Spirit R, displays the mascot girl Sylvi telling you something about Project Torque and what you have to do next, and then lets you run through checkpoints clearly marked with holographic columns on the street. Your objective is to complete all these checkpoints while getting used to the controls and the driving behavior of the car, all the while you are getting small messages from the game on the screen encouraging you to drive. The tutorial is fun, so just do it; it will be the only time for now you get to drive on San Francisco Marina (except for the Career)!

2.2. Default Controls

The default keyboard controls are simple. First, click on the bubble telling you what to do next to get rid of it, then press the arrow keys to accelerate, brake and steer. Press the function keys F1 to F8 to toggle the camera: F1 is cockpit view, F2 and F3 are hood and roof views, F5 and F6 are third-person views. You can press Escape and click

on "Options" to get to the options screen where you can configure your analog input controller, and then continue the tutorial driving with the controller (see *4.4. Control Settings*).

2.3. Cancelling and Repeating the Tutorial

Of course, if you are like me and want to get things sorted out first, like graphics, screen resolution and game options, you can quit the tutorial and come back later. This is done by pressing Escape and selecting "Retire". To redo the tutorial, select "Mission" in the main menu and on the Career screen, select the first mission to play it again.

2.4. Starter Car Selection

Whether you complete the tutorial or not, before you can get to the main menu, you have to select your car. The game gives you the four starter cars and requires you to select one of them to make your own. That's right, you will not have to buy your first car, it is yours for free! Hover over each car to see its specs and information. As the game suggests, the Corus S3 is the most well-balanced starter car to enjoy Project Torque, with good handling, good top speed and good acceleration. The other cars have better handling but less top speed, or better speed but less handling, and so on. Also worth noting is that the Kawana is the only rear-wheel-driven car here, and if you want to tune up your starter car to get drifting later, this might be the right choice.

3. Main Menu

So now you have finally made it to the main menu! From here you can get to all the things Project Torque has to offer. We will quickly go through all the menu points and see what they do. A few words about the main screen itself:

On top of the screen there will be some news ticker running along, telling you what the developers have planned for the next update or what is currently happening. Below that, on the right side, you can see the items that will be unlocked next once you reach the required number of Experience Points. Under that you can see your statistics, telling you what level you are currently at, how many XP you need for the next level, and several statistics about your races. On the bottom bar you get to the options and when clicking on "Exit", you will be prompted to either select another game server, go to the login screen, or quit the game.

If you see the chat window when entering the main menu for the first time, you can safely close it by clicking on the little X button. The chat can be recalled at any time by pressing the default chat key Y (or Z on QWERTZ keyboards).

3.1. Play

As the name suggests, the "Play" option opens up the world of Project Torque to you and lets you duke it out wheel-to-wheel with other players around the world. If you think you are ready to race online, select this, otherwise go for the next point.

3.2. Practice

It is a good idea for newbies to practice a bit with the starter car before racing online. Although the practice sessions, like any game mode, require you to be online at all times to save your progress, you will be alone on the track here and you can go on any map, track and with any car you have previously unlocked or purchased, and train your skills. You will not be awarded any points for this, but since you are practicing, it is also good that you will not have to worry about any penalties!

3.3. Mission

The Mission mode offers many ways to quickly earn lots of Race Points and Experience Points to help you level up faster. You can play the "Career" which is a kind of story that takes you through various challenges and rewards you with Race Points, Experience Points and even other starter cars.
"Tasks" are separate goals you can reach in any race type and with any car, like "reach 200 km/h on a Tokyo track", so you can complete them at any time during any race after you unlocked them.
"Driving Challenges" on the other hand must be unlocked and then completed directly, and in most cases the car for the challenge is provided to you. Tasks and challenges both offer Race Points as rewards. All three mission types must be unlocked with Mission Bonus Keys (see *Part C, 4.1. Mission Mode Menu Options*) before you can accomplish them.

3.4. License

This option takes you to the license tests. You will have to complete the first test after reaching level 6, but you can practice the tests at any time. The car for the tests, a Toyota Corolla GT-S, is provided to you.

3.5. Replay

The races in Project Torque can be saved as replays. To save a replay, you have to buy a "replay medium" in the shop and use the "Replay" button or "Save replay" option after a race. A replay medium only costs a few points, can save 20 replays, and can be helpful if you want to analyze stuff from the race later.
The "Replay" option in the main menu allows you to watch the replay of the last race and save it to disk (using a replay medium) or to load a previously saved replay.

3.6. Shop

As the name implies, this is where you buy cars and parts as well as some miscellaneous stuff, like Sponsor Girls, nickname changers, or replay media. The shop becomes interesting once you have earned your first few Race Points. Also, any of the cars can be test driven here.

3.7. Garage

In the garage you can switch cars, test drive them, and remove or add parts. It is similar to the shop, but you cannot buy anything.

3.8. Ranking

The ranking shows your all-time position in the leader boards of Project Torque. You can see lap records set by players for any track and sort them in different ways.

4. Setting Up the Game: the Options Menu

Customizing the options in Project Torque is important to fully enjoy the game. Especially setting up the input method is crucial, and there are a few options whose function not everyone is aware of. I will try to be as thorough as possible when covering those, so that some long-standing questions can be rid of.

Important: if you want your changes to be saved, you must not forget to click on "Apply" on the bottom right of the screen. The changes you made may be kept for a while if you forget this, but they will revert to the old settings at the latest when you quit and restart the game. If you messed up an options screen and want to return to the default settings, simply click on the "Reset" button at the center bottom of the screen.

4.1. Game Options

We start with the game options since they are the basics of the whole. There are basic and advanced options, which I will cover in the next point.
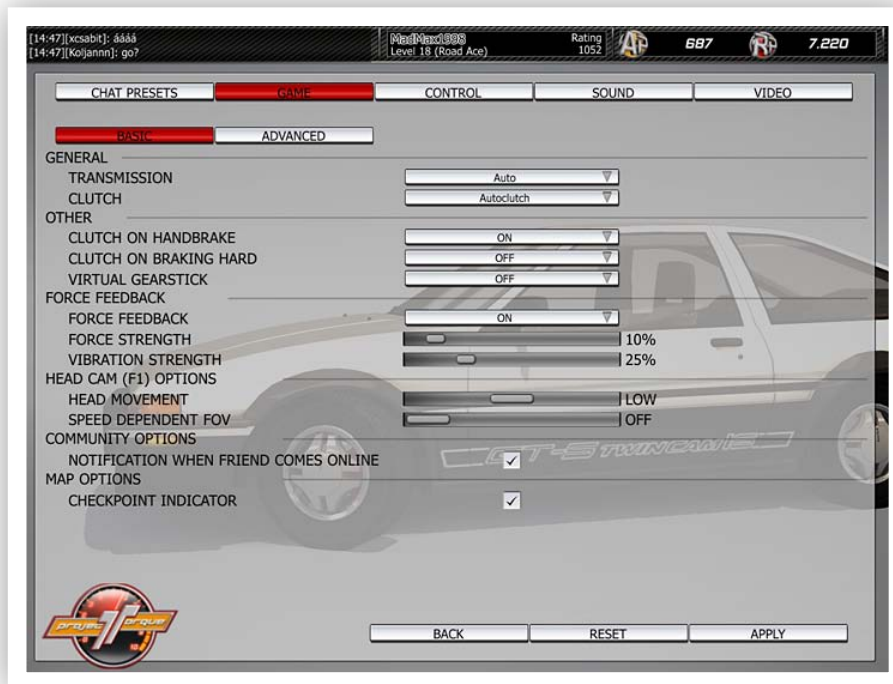
Transmission: Select "Auto" if you want automatic gear-shifting or "Manual" if you want to shift gears yourself. "Semi-auto" is a kind of "shifting assistance" that shifts when you do not, but lets you shift if you want to. "Semi-auto 2" however requires manual shifting except for the first gear from neutral.

To most players it seems to be best to leave this on automatic, because you will be busy enough steering, controlling gas and brake, drifting, and generally working to keep the car on track. Now, if you want real simulation or you think you are faster when shifting yourself, go right ahead. I actually find it very cool to shift manually, especially when you have a steering wheel with a shifting knob or the awesome Logitech G25, in which case automatic shifting is a waste of money! But if you use your wheel to steer 900 degrees, working against force feedback, holding the handbrake while drifting and controlling your gas bursts to keep the car sliding, you may be too busy to watch your tachometer and shift properly. At least I have decided to go with automatic transmission because of this. Whatever you do – try it out yourself and find the balance.

Clutch: Select "Autoclutch" if you want the game to clutch for you. Since most steering wheels only have two pedals, manual clutching is impractical unless you can get used to pressing a button every time you change gears. The same goes for gamepads and the

keyboard, so the automatic setting is the recommended one. If you want to clutch manually, for example when you have a clutch pedal with your steering wheel, select "Manual clutch".

Clutch on Handbrake: Default is "ON", which means that every time you pull the e-brake (emergency brake, handbrake), the car will automatically clutch to unlock the wheels from the gears. This is usually done when drifting to let the rear of the car slide, because when you clutch on e-braking in a rear wheel driven car, the rear wheels will lose grip and start sliding. Also, not clutching on an e-brake drift will slow the car down, killing the drift. If you turn this option to "OFF", the clutch will not automatically be activated when e-braking, which makes drifting with the e-brake more difficult (you need to clutch manually for best results).

Clutch on Braking Hard: Default is "OFF", but it can be set to "ON" to have the same effect like the "Clutch on Handbrake" option. When you give the brakes full weight, the car will automatically clutch to unlock the wheels from the gears and enable braking drifts more easily. However, since hard braking is often done without drifting in mind, this can lead to loose grip when you do not want it.

Virtual Gearstick: This option transforms your mouse into a gearshifter. You can move the mouse up and down and to the left and right at the same time to shift as you would in a real car. The game helps you by displaying the car's gearshifter pattern on the screen every time you move the mouse. Default is "OFF".

Force Feedback: Set to "ON" to enable force feedback on your analog input device.

Force Strength: On steering wheels, this changes the amount of force applied to the wheel when the car is under simulated forces, like g-force, wheel grip, steering weight, and impact forces. This can be turned up fairly heavy, and at 100% you may have trouble steering your car with a good wheel. More about realistic force feedback is discussed in a separate force feedback part of this guide (see *Part G, 4. A Word on Force Feedback*).

Vibration Strength: On steering wheels, this changes the amount of vibration you will feel when driving over bumpy terrain. Turning this up or down does not really have an effect on how the car drives, but much more on how bumpy you like your standard kerb strip or brick road. On gamepads with rumble motors, this option controls the amount of vibration produced.

Head Movement: Default is "LOW", but it can also be set to "HIGH" and "OFF". Depends on your taste and how much you want the camera to move to the apex of the corner you are steering into. Steering left will make the camera look left and steering right will make

it look right. "LOW" is a good help to see the corners better, but some people prefer "HIGH" and yet others are disturbed by the effect and turn it off.

Speed Dependent FOV: Sets whether the field of view (FOV) should change with higher speeds, and how much. Depends on your taste. Default is "OFF".

Notification When Friends Come Online: This checkbox simply defines whether or not you want to be informed by a small text box when one of your friends enters the game server you are on. Friends are players you have added to your friend list and who have approved your friendship.

Checkpoint Indicator: Defines whether or not checkpoints are displayed on the track map on the bottom left of the screen. This has no effect on the checkpoint markers on the track itself.

4.2. Advanced Game Options

You get to these options by clicking on "Advanced" next to "Basic".
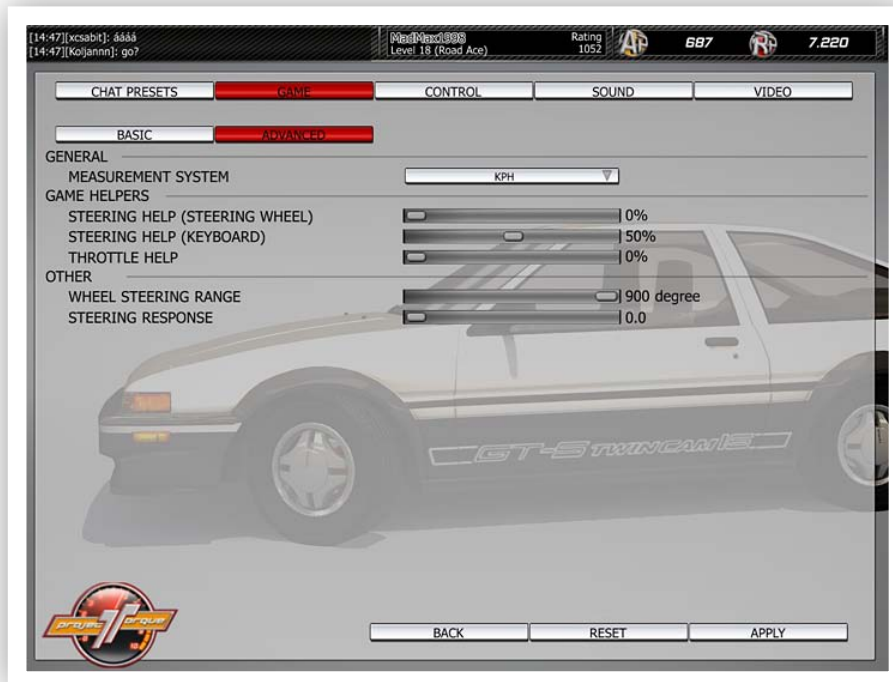
Measurement System: Defines which system to use to display speed in the game. Default is "MPH" (miles per hour), but can be set to "KPH" (kilometers per hour).

Steering Help (Steering Wheel): The first of three "Game Helpers", options which can make driving easier by offering assistance with steering and throttling. This helper offers steering assistance when you use an analog input device. Can be somewhat helpful when you have a gamepad with analog sticks, since these often have little margin for error due to their small movement space. On steering wheels, it should be no problem to drive without this helper or turn it to a low setting. The effect it has can be helpful, but it can also be disturbing if the car does not go exactly where you wanted it.

Steering Help (Keyboard): Controls how much steering assistance you get when using digital inputs, such as a keyboard, to steer the car. Since digital steering is always either none or full, this helper can indeed make life easier, but you need to experiment a bit and change it while practicing until you have found the right balance.

Throttle Help: Controls the amount of assistance the game gives you when you put the pedal to the metal. This helper keeps the wheels from spinning when you give the car too much gas and behaves much like traction control in motorsport or ESP in street cars. Of course you might want to give the wheels an overspin when drifting, or if you know how to treat your analog gas pedal well and do not want any assistance, simply turn this slider to zero.

Wheel Steering Range: This is a setting that has created some discussion on the community forums because it is unclear to many how exactly this works. I will explain it in short here, but there is a detailed discussion in *Part G, 1.6. Steering Range Clearly Explained.*
What this option essentially does is define the range the car steers in both directions, in degrees, when you fully steer with your input device. So if you set this to 360 degrees and fully steer to the right, the car will steer 180 degrees (180 left and 180 right steering = 360 degrees total steering range). However, Project Torque incorporates a helpful system here that makes sure you can still turn around tight hairpins even when you have the lowest possible steering range (90 degrees). It does so by fully increasing the range to 900 degrees when you slow down to below 10 km/h, gradually decreasing it to meet your range setting at about 100 km/h. So no matter how you set this up, you can expect to get around tight corners more or less easily at low speeds while keeping the car from oversteering on straights or soft curves. From personal experience, I think it is best to set this to the same range your input can go – so 180 degrees if you have a 180 degree wheel.

Steering Response: This slider features a numerical value from 0.0 to 10.0, which defines how quickly the game reacts to digital steering input. If you play Project Torque with a keyboard or steer with buttons instead of sticks on a gamepad, this number will have an

effect on how fast the game steers for you when you press a steer button or key. It has no effect whatsoever with analog input controls.

4.3. Chat Presets
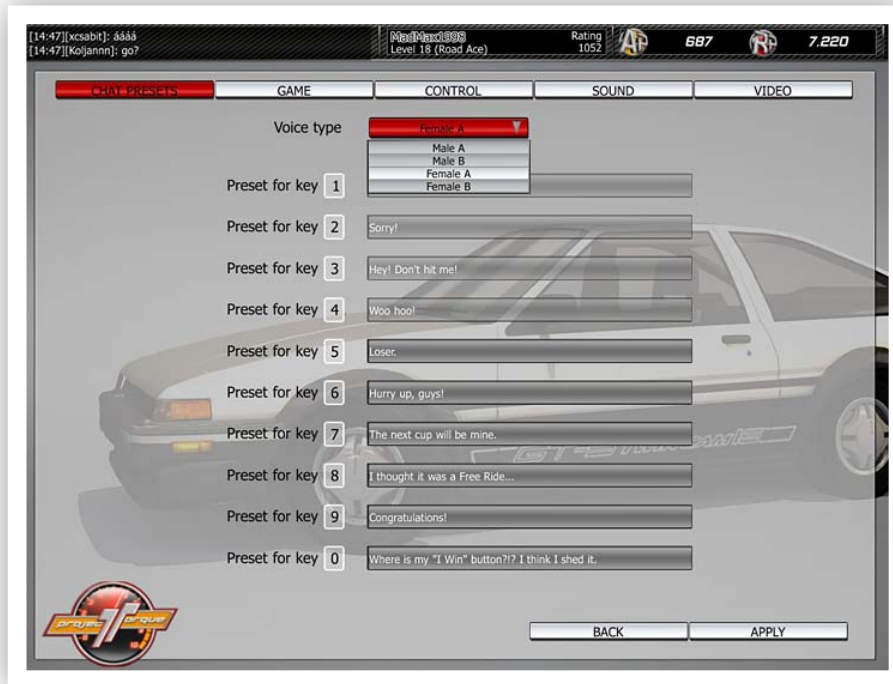
Chat presets, or macros, are a quick and easy way to enter chat messages when you do not have enough time to type. Instead of entering a message manually and crashing in between, you can simply press a key between 1 and 0 to enter the preset message bound to that key. In Project Torque, the first four chat presets also have voice samples that are audible to all players in a race. While it is not possible to change these voice clips, you can change the text messages bound to every key by typing the desired message next to the number of the key you want to assign it to. Plus, you can select between two male and two female voices to speak the voice clips. The clips will differ a bit in words, but essentially say the same.

4.4. Control Settings

This is where you map your input device's buttons and axes to functions in the game. The game features two possible bindings per function, so you can bind a gamepad button and a keyboard key to the same thing, as an example.

If you want to assign a keyboard key to a function, simply click on the existing definition (or the "UNDEFINED" word) and press the key you want to bind this function to. It works the same way with buttons on gamepads or steering wheels: simply press the button to assign the function to it.

If you want to assign a function to an axis, for example "Accelerate" to the gas pedal of your steering wheel, simply push down the gas pedal when the game waits for your input, and it will recognize the axis and in what direction it goes. Steering left and steering right are two separate functions just like throttling and braking, so they are easy to set up.

If you assign the same key, button or axis to two functions, you will see the words "double definition" appear. In this case, assign one of the two double defined functions to another key, button or axis.

Below the assignment table, you can see three buttons saying "Set 1", "Set 2" and "Set 3". These buttons toggle three sets of input mappings so that you can define up to three different configurations. For example, you might want to have one for drifting where you

pull the e-brake with your shifting knob on the steering wheel, or one for an analog gamepad if you feel like racing arcade.

On the right of the screen you can test your throttle, brake, steering and clutch controls. If you use axes for these, moving sticks, pushing pedals or turning the wheel will show you how the game interprets the analog input. Make sure that it goes all fully up and down, and that the steering is centered when the wheel or stick is centered.
If you have a steering wheel with an H-shifter, like the Logitech G25, there will be an option under the test area saying "use H-shifter" that you must tick if you want to use the H-shifter for non-sequential shifting. If the option is off, you can simply assign two gears to the "shift up" and "shift down" functions for sequential shifting.

If you click on the "Chat" button next to the "General" functions you have just configured, you can assign keys or buttons to chat functions. Leaving those at default will probably be nice, though, unless you want to completely change your keyboard control layout for the game.

4.5. Sound Settings

The sound settings in Project Torque are simple: they basically mix all the effects and music together at different volume levels.
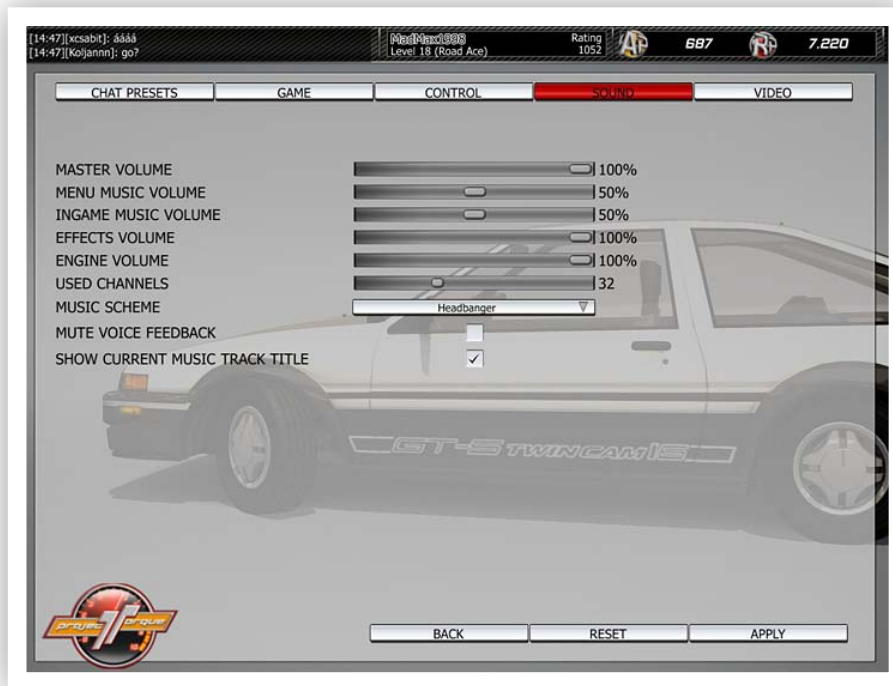
Master Volume: Unless you find the volume of the sound in the game too heavy, push this up to 100% to get the maximum level. The sound volume in Project Torque is fairly low even at the max.

Menu Music Volume: Adjust how loud you want the music to be in the menu screens. Unless you want it to be quieter or louder than in the races, set this to the same level as "In-game Music Volume".

In-game Music Volume: Adjust how loud you want the music to be on the racetrack. Unless you want it to be quieter or louder than in the menus, set this to the same level as "Menu Music Volume".

Effects Volume: Used to level the volume of the sound effects (environment, other cars, tires…) compared to the engine volume and the music.

Engine Volume: Used to level the volume of your car's engine compared to the effects volume and the music.

Used Channels: This setting defines how many channels are available to the sound engine at the same time. Music takes up two channels (for left and right stereo) and any other sound effect takes up one channel, so if three engines and two tires are heard, this makes for a total of five used channels at the same time. Default is 32 which is a fine value, but it can be set lower if you need the performance (although the impact is virtually nonexistent) or even higher if you feel that sounds are missing at times.

Music Scheme: Select from the "Headbanger" or the "Electronic" music scheme to let the game play its own rock or electro soundtrack. Songs will play in random order in the menus and during races, and you can skip forward and backward alphabetically using the assigned keys or buttons. If you want to play songs from your own music collection, simply put WAV, MP3 or OGG files in the "music\mymusic" folder inside the Project Torque installation folder, and select the "My Music" scheme instead of the built-in two schemes.

Mute Voice Feedback: This options seems to be nonfunctional.

Show Current Music Track Title: Selects whether or not you want to see the artist and title of the currently played song.

4.6. Video Settings

The most important options screen to make the game look beautiful or tweak for performance. Understanding these settings will help you get the most out of the game while maintaining a good frame rate. Remember: online racing requires smooth movement and choppy frame rates can ruin the experience! Nonetheless, try to get all the eye candy you can – Project Torque is a beautiful game!

Again, do not forget to hit "Apply" after you made changes to save them. Also, some settings will take effect only after restarting the game, which it will tell you per setting.
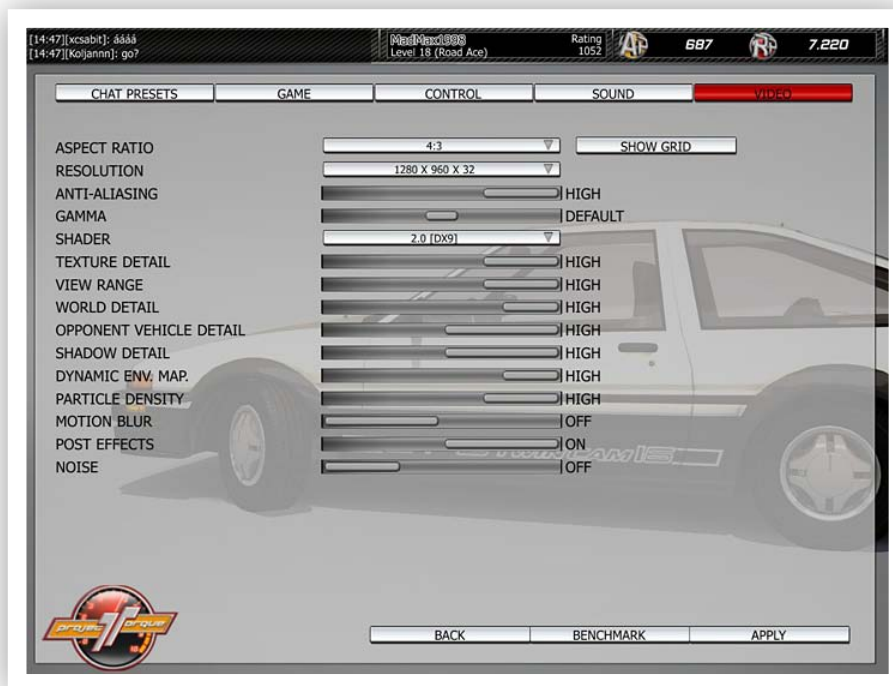
Aspect Ratio: 4:3 aspect ratio will fit to a standard 4:3 screen, as in "not widescreen". If you do not own a widescreen monitor, select this. However, if you have a TFT screen which is almost square and usually displays 1280x1024 pixels, select 5:4. If you do have widescreen, select 16:10 or 16:9 instead, depending on how wide your screen is. You can click on "Show Grid" to see whether the grid is made of squares or rectangles: if there are rectangles, the aspect ratio is wrong.
If you select "Windowed" here, the game will go out of fullscreen mode and display in a window that can have any aspect ratio.

Resolution: Format is "width in pixels X height in pixels X color depth in bits". If you have a TFT or other flat screen, it is best to select the native resolution of the screen to get the sharpest picture. If you own a CRT (tube) monitor or you feel the game does not run smoothly, select any resolution you feel comfortable with, and be careful not to overdo it – the game will require you to click "accept" or "cancel" after the resolution changes, and if you get a black screen, you chose a resolution your monitor cannot handle. In this case, wait 10 seconds and it will return to the old setting.

Anti-Aliasing: Reduces the "staircase effect" that you see on sharp edges of objects displayed on screen, especially in low resolutions. "LOW" anti-aliasing equals 2x and is good to smoothen out some edges in higher resolutions with only a small performance hit on most modern graphics cards. "HIGH" equals about 4x and will impact performance considerably unless you own a good graphics card, but the picture will look very smooth

and practically free of visible pixel steps. Can be turned off to disable anti-aliasing to increase performance.

Gamma: Move the slider to the left (lower gamma) if you feel that the game is too bright on your screen, and to the right (higher gamma) if it seems too dark. Notice that enhancing gamma too much can lead to washed out colors. You might also try increasing or decreasing the brightness/contrast values of your monitor.

Shader: Defines the shader model to use. If you have a DirectX 9 graphics card, this will be set to shader model "2.0 [DX9]", which allows the game to use your card's shader processors to display effects such as mirroring on the car's body, HDR lighting, and post processing. If you have a lower-end graphics card or you need to fall back to DirectX 8 graphics for some other reason, select shader model "1.1 [DX8]". The aforementioned effects will now be disabled.

Texture Detail: Defines the resolution of the textures in the game. This goes for the textures on your own car as well as the environment you drive in. If you have enough video memory on your graphics card and RAM in your system, there is no reason not to go with "MEDIUM" or "HIGH" here – if the game takes long to load, starts hitching or generally has low performance with "HIGH", fall back to "MEDIUM" to see whether this helps. "LOW" is most likely only helpful if you have a low-end graphics card or on-board chip.

View Range: Defines how far you can see in the game. "MEDIUM" and "LOW" settings will produce a pop-up effect of scenery objects coming into the selected view range, but will reduce data to be processed by your computer.

World Detail: Defines how many objects you can see trackside. This goes for everything from buildings to trees to bystanders and decorative objects. Setting this to "HIGH" will make the environment much more interesting, but it may impact performance a bit since the maps in Project Torque are quite detailed. You can reduce world detail in three steps by moving the slider to the left and see whether this improves performance if you have problems.

Opponent Vehicle Detail: This option does more than it suggests. On "LOW", any cars that are not your own (i.e. all cars of opponent racers) will be scaled down in terms of texture resolution and model mesh detail. This means that you might be able to tell pixels on the texture of another player's car as well as some reduced detail in the body mesh. However, the low texture resolution is a greater factor.
The option also influences how cars look in the shop, in missions and in test drive sessions if they are not owned by you. This can lead to edgy-looking steering wheels in

some cars that you drive if you have not purchased them, and of course these cars will also have low texture resolution, most visible in the shop with vinyls attached. On "HIGH", every car will look great with full mesh and texture detail, but performance will decrease when you race with many other players.

Shadow Detail: Defines how many and how detailed shadows appear. On "LOW", only simple blob shadows are visible from cars and objects which is not very realistic, but can increase performance quite a bit if you need it. On "MEDIUM", the cars will cast realistic shadows, but object shadows will still look somewhat undetailed which provides a good compromise between performance and realism. The "HIGH" setting enables detailed shadows for all objects. Looks the most realistic, but impacts performance especially when world detail is also at maximum, since more objects cast more shadows.

Dynamic Env. Map: Sets the detail of the dynamic environment mapping seen on cars. "HIGH" will give you the most detailed reflection of the environment on your car's body, but it may reduce performance on slower graphics cards. You can reduce this option in three steps by moving the slider to the left to increase performance and decrease detail, or turn it off completely.

Particle Density: Defines how many particles to use for particle effects like smoke, dirt and water splashes. The visible difference between "LOW" and "HIGH" is marginal, so it can be set to "LOW" for a little more performance. Setting this to "OFF" will show no smoke or dirt at all.

Motion Blur: This is actually a technique which blurs the environment on the edges of the screen when you move fast and simulates the blur you see with your eyes in reality when objects move fast. In many games, motion blur has become a standard and looks quite good although it takes a bit of processing power. However, in Project Torque this function does nothing more than pixel blur (reduce the resolution) of the screen edges, and worst of all, things that do not move (like the car cockpit) are blurred along. The visual quality and realism of this option is therefore questionable and it can be turned off to get a much cleaner look. However, performance is not usually reduced when it is on (unlike in games with real motion blur).

High Dynamic Range: HDR lighting is actually a simulation of the lighting intensity you see in the real world: sunlight is too bright to look into with unprotected eyes, and if reflected off other surfaces, it may still blind you. Computer screens cannot display the same luminance (light intensity) as the real world, so HDR lighting simulates the effect by oversaturating bright and dark colors depending on the situation you are in: in dark areas, games with HDR will "turn up" the brightness and show you more than what is

actually there, and in bright areas, things will start to glare and the sky will be white instead of blue to simulate the bright sunlight.

There is a "bloom" effect in other games which looks a little like HDR while it is in fact just a cosmetic special effect with no real simulation behind. What Project Torque does with the HDR option is basically saturate the colors a little more and enable some bloom on bright lights and surfaces. The performance impact is minor on modern graphics cards, but it may be useful to turn this off if you feel it disturbs you, or if you have an older graphics card.

Note: this option was removed with the latest update for unknown reasons. Many players hope that it will be included again in a future update, so the information is still here for reference. HDR is constantly turned on at the moment.

Noise: Usually set to "OFF", this effect will only generate film noise as seen in cinematic movies when it is on. The point of this effect is questionable, but there is virtually no performance impact.

Contrast: This setting is actually more related to the real HDR lighting simulation I mentioned before. When turned off, the colors will look neutral and quite dull, and the HDR option above helps correct this. But if you turn up contrast to "LOW" or even "HIGH", the game will simulate perception changes of light to some extent. If for example you drive in third-person view, you will see relatively neutral colors, but when you switch to cockpit view, everything will become brighter and more saturated, further increasing the colors and overbrightening the environment while also lighting up the cockpit itself. So while the HDR option is only a cosmetic effect, contrast is indeed a little simulation of HDR lighting although it is incomplete. For best results I would recommend turning contrast to "LOW" and enable the HDR effect above.

Note: this option was removed with the latest update for unknown reasons. Many players hope that it will be included again in a future update, so the information is still here for reference. Contrast is constantly set to "HIGH" at the moment, which brightens up many scenes unnaturally.

Post Effects: Also known as post processing, this term refers to any effects that are laid over the rendered picture of a game: color tint, depth of field, blur (not motion-based) and other cinematic effects. While this is often used to stylize the looks of a game and not for realism, post effects can produce very nice looks especially with different daytimes on different tracks, and set atmosphere. Requires the shader model 2.0 and a graphics card with enough power to handle it, and can be turned off to increase performance on older cards.

If you click on "Benchmark" on the bottom edge of the screen, the game will determine which video settings are optimal for your system. However, benchmarking my system

messed up my personal settings a lot, so I suggest you experiment yourself to get the most out of the graphics.

This wraps up the main menu and options guide. Up next are the game modes of Project Torque!

Part C:
Game Modes

In this part we will look at the game modes that Project Torque offers. Race types and all the features that are important to racing are covered here.

1. Menu Navigation and Chat Interface

All the game modes in Project Torque share one menu system which meets the demands of the specific game mode you want to race in, while offering you general options which are the same in every mode. Also, accessing the in-game chat is possible from practically everywhere in the game.

1.1. Standard Options in All Game Modes

When you select a game mode, what you will see on the top and bottom of the screen will always be similar, no matter what mode you are in. At the top of the screen you can always check your status – your nickname, level, rating (see *Part D, 3.1. Rating Explained*) and points. In some game modes, especially online, there will also be a tab saying "Your Cars" which you can hover over to open a window displaying your cars in groups of four. Simply scroll through the gallery and select the car you want to race with in this mode. In Practice mode, the car gallery is openly displayed at all times. In Mission mode, no car selection is allowed since the missions predefine the car to be used (with exceptions). The bottom of the screen always shows buttons offering necessary options. In many cases these buttons include one to start the race, one to go to the options menu, and of course an exit button which will take you to the main menu.

1.2. Quick Chat Access and Configuration

Accessing the in-game chat only requires you to press a key: Y (or Z on QWERTZ keyboards), or the key you assigned to the chat function in the control settings (see *Part B, 4.4. Control Settings*). You can press the chat key several times to display the chat window in different sizes: full size with a frame, tabs and user list, compact without the user list and with hover-over tabs, or minimized. In compact mode, move the mouse to the top of the chat window to see the tabs. You can always grab the chat window with the mouse and move it around, except in races where the window positions are fixed. Hit Enter at any time to type a message, regardless of the window size, and during races. Use minimized mode to move the chat out of your way in menus; the default position is the top left corner of the screen where it blocks no information.
In a race, the chat window will not go into full size mode when you press the chat key; instead the third key pressing will make it invisible, clearing your view to drive. Press the chat key again to switch to minimized mode. Since you cannot see the mouse cursor while driving, you can switch chat tabs with the predefined [and] keys or customize those in the control settings. This way you will be able to open private conversations and chat in the "System" tab while racing.

You can easily tailor the chat to your needs by right-clicking on any tab and setting options in the context menu that appears. Under "Tab options" you can create and name a new tab or rename the tab you clicked on to open the menu. You can also show the available default channels in the chat and assign them to a tab.

The options below let you configure the look of the chat window: font size, colors and the line count of the compact window are all customizable. You can also tick checkboxes such as "Show date", "Minimize ingame" or "Activate on join", which toggles whether the chat should switch to the default channel when you join a room, race type channel, or the main menu lobby. You can also look at the full list of channels available and open one, or create your own channel. Finally, the chat voice clips can be turned on or off.

Just recently the "System" tab, which is technically used for game messages, was released to public chatting. Players can now access this tab and type messages which will then be sent to practically every player on the whole server, no matter whether they are racing, sitting in a room or hanging out in the menus. The developers want to enhance communications between players by opening this channel.

1.3. Viewing User Information

When you are on a channel, you can see all players in the full-size chat window that are in the same channel, room or race with you. Click on a player's nickname to receive options for this player: you can view their information (level, rating, car, points), open a private chat with them, send a friendship invitation or, if they sent you an invitation, accept theirs. Friends are marked with a little red heart on their user symbol. You can also search for other users here.

2. Race Types

When playing online, all of the eight race types in Project Torque will be available to play once you have unlocked them. For example, Thunder Alley requires level 8 before you can play this type. In Practice mode, several of the race types are available – again if you have unlocked them – and others (like Capture the Flag) cannot be practiced because they require other players to work. Before we go over to the game modes in detail, here is the rundown of the race types in Project Torque.

2.1. Arcade VS

This mode used to be called "Amateur VS" in earlier versions, so if you see this term anywhere, it refers to Arcade VS. This is the easiest racing mode for beginners and there are two reasons for this. One, cars cannot collide with each other, a function which is called "Ghost" in the game. Ghost can be turned on and off in other modes, but it is fixed to on in Arcade VS. Two, the driving model is a little less on the simulation side, allowing for easier drifting in corners and forgiving little mistakes. It is however not comparable to real arcade racers like Need for Speed or Midnight Club, as the driving itself still feels quite real. The simulation model which is the basis of Project Torque has just been loosened a bit.

Cars in Arcade VS cannot collide with each other, but of course they can crash with the environment or with cars that are decoration! The primary reason why Ghost mode is

active in Arcade VS is that this race type is meant for beginners and people who do not want to drive like in a simulation, which often results in ramming and crashing, be it by accident or intentional. And since online racing requires fairness to work, car collisions are avoided here regardless of the driving style of certain players.

This race type will be available from the very beginning.

2.2. Simulation VS

Formerly called "Pro VS", this is the pro race type of Project Torque, the one where you will experience the game's true abilities. Branded as "simulation", it does not always feel that difficult really. It is easy to start up the car and go straight ahead without having to work to keep a straight line or worrying about spinning out when accelerating. These things can

happen, but it depends on the car you are driving and your input method. Game Helpers (see *Part B, 4.2. Advanced Game Options*) can increase your driving safety if you feel that simulation mode is difficult. But all in all, this race type is where the true racing action is in Project Torque, and other modes use the same driving model as the base. And it is a lot of fun once you can handle it!

Naturally, unless Ghost is turned on here, cars can and will collide with each other. Clean racing is key to provide a fair and enjoyable experience to all players in a race. Practicing Simulation VS before going to the race should be mandatory... and again, it will make things a lot more fun if you can drive clean and fast!

2.3. Drift

This race type uses another driving model (the last of three) than Arcade and Simulation VS: the drift model. Practically any car can be drifted here and if you can handle drifts in Arcade VS, you will find it much easier to do them here. The Drift race type is different from the two traditional racing modes in that the goal is in the drifts and not the best lap

time or the first position. Longer and more complex drifting will award you with more points, and the cumulative drift time will determine the winner in the end.

While this race type may cater to the taste of *Initial D* and drifting fans, it does not require as much skill and is not as realistic as drifting in Simulation VS. You will not get any points when drifting in other race types unless the game rewards you with a "Perfect Drift" bonus, but drifting in normal races and doing it right can make the difference between winning and losing. And this is what fast drifting is all about! So the Drift race type is much more of a fun and show mode rather than true simulated drifting. And of course it is still challenging!

The new drift cars with the red class sticker have been introduced to Project Torque specially for this mode. They offer tuned high-end performance from the day of purchase, which makes them easier to drift than stock street cars. However, these cars are not mandatory and practically any car can be used in Drift mode.

2.4. Drag

Drag mode places you on a straight of a track that is long enough to warrant a quarter mile speed race. Tokyo's streets are perfect for drag races, where the only goal is to be the first to cross the line, but it is all determined by the raw power of your car as well as how well you accelerate and how good your shifting timing is. That's right, in this race type you will not be able to rely on your automatic transmission, you will have to do it yourself. The challenge is to shift when your tachometer, which is displayed as a huge graphic on the left of the screen, hits the point between green and red, so that you will use all the torque your engine gives you before shifting up, setting yourself apart from the others.

Before the race starts, players "warm up" with a burnout sequence which requires you to hit the gas at specific points when the game tells you. This will make the wheels of your car spin through and leave marks on the asphalt, a show effect many street racers do when they enter a race.

While Drag is a race type that has its roots in street racing, it is also more of a fun mode and a nice distraction from normal racing.

2.5. Thunder Alley

This is a very popular race type which attempts to copy the high speed NASCAR™ races driven mostly on ovals in the U.S.A. Thunder Alley currently only features one track, the Sunbay Speedway which is a triangular oval with two banked curves, a long straight, and a small corner before the finish line. In this mode every player races the same car (a special Thunder Alley car of which there are three), going around the oval at maximum speed. It is a kind of endurance race with a minimum of five laps and going up to 60! Naturally the first to cross the finish line is the winner, so it is a traditional race. However, since everyone drives at the same speed, racing in this mode is a little different as you use the slipstream of cars in front of you to gain speed and slingshot past them, which in turn will give them the ability to use your slipstream to overtake you again. This is called drafting and the game makes it easy to draft by showing soft blue circles behind a car that is close enough to you to draft on. This may seem typically arcade and racing Thunder Alley is not as complicated as racing real NASCAR™, but winning it requires just as much cunning and quick reaction to crashes that will inevitably happen – or otherwise you will be out before you know it, which is the weak point of this race type: once you have left the track, you will have a hard time coming back to the front.

Another thing that makes this race type stand out from the others is that there are pit stops included. When racing more than five laps, you will have to go to the pits to refuel every eight to nine laps. It is important to slow down to the 80 km/h speed limit and keep below that speed while driving through the pit lane. Stopping inside the green square will refuel the car until you start going again. If you disregard the speed limit in the pit lane, you will have a drive-through penalty on your hands. In longer races, the timing of your pit stop and how well you do it are definite factors that influence the race result. So Thunder Alley is not all about speed, it is also about strategy.

2.6. Explorer

This is probably the least "race"-like type in Project Torque, but it can be a lot of fun nonetheless and it allows you to quickly collect some Race Points and maybe even some special rewards. In this mode, the objective is to actually collect these points by driving over them. The points are represented by red, blue and green buttons scattered all over a map. There is no specific track to follow and there are no barriers blocking the way; you can go anywhere you want to look for points. Sometimes you will encounter other bonuses such as tire grip, nitro, a compass to show you the way to the nearest points, and the mysterious question marks which can reward you with prizes, but also mess up your driving by doing all kinds of weird stuff to your car or the screen – from inverted steering to driving upside-down. Combining the points by collecting them in a specific order will result in a combo bonus.

Players start out at different points of the map and go hunting each on their own. Progress indicators tell you who has collected the most points at any given time, and a counter displays how many are left on the map. Also, the game ends when the timer at the top of the screen reaches zero, and the only thing keeping it from doing so is collecting points. So the less points are left in the map, the harder it becomes to keep the game going.

Explorer is especially fun on widespread maps like Tokyo or in offroad environments.

2.7. Capture the Flag

Capture the Flag, also known as CTF, is a popular team-based match mode originally found in first-person shooters. There are two bases on a map with one flag per base, and the two teams have to guard their own base as well as try to get to the other team's flag, steal it and bring it into their base. Doing this with cars becomes even more difficult and transforms the otherwise traditional shooter game into a real racing and ramming match.
The rules have been simplified a bit in Project Torque: there is only one flag on the map and after it is captured by a player, he must try and hold it for as long as possible. The

other players chase the flag carrier and try to ram him to pick the flag off of him. Whoever holds the flag the longest, wins. It is also possible to gain more points by driving through checkpoints with the flag, or chasing the flag carrier through the checkpoints. Like Explorer, this is one of the race types that cannot be practiced because it needs several players to work.

When playing CTF, it is vital to control the car perfectly. You have to react to circumstances otherwise not found in a race and be able to steer quickly to catch the opponent. This is why specific cars, like buggies, are perfect for this race type.

2.8. Challenge

The Challenge race type is actually a normal race on a normal track with normal cars, but it must be entered with a Challenge Ticket which can be bought with Aeria Points only in the shop. Every player taking part in the race submits their ticket to the prize pool, which then becomes the object of desire to all players. The winner of the race gets 80% of the Aeria Points in the pool, while the second-placed driver gets the remaining 20%.

This race type is the only one requiring Aeria Points to be played, but it is also the only way to get Aeria Points for free other than contests.

3. Practice Mode

Now that the race types are covered, let's look at the game modes in Project Torque, starting off with Practice. In this game mode, you can select from the Arcade, Simulation, Drift, Drag and Thunder Alley race types, pick any of the unlocked maps and tracks for the chosen race type, choose the daytime/season scenario and number of laps, and go on the track with your own car to do a time trial. In Practice mode you will not be awarded anything, but there will be no penalties when you make mistakes.

3.1. Practice Mode Menu Options

The menu screen in Practice mode is split in two. On the left you see the map configuration, which displays a screenshot of the map and a graph of the selected track over it. Under the picture you can see the elevation and length of the track in meters as well as the direction – CW means clockwise and CCW counter-clockwise. The options below are the following:

Mode: This is where you set the race type of the practice session. Choose from Arcade VS, Simulation VS or Drift to drive normal laps with the respective driving model, Drag if you want to race quarter miles, or Thunder Alley if you want to get to Sunbay Speedway and practice oval racing with pit stops.

Map: Choose the environment you want to race in. Maps may not be available on specific race types while they may be on others.

TOD: Time of day – select the daytime/season scenario for the map. Different maps have different scenarios.

Route/Track: Select the track to drive on.

Laps: Available for lap racing. Choose from three, five or seven laps. If you want to practice for an undetermined time, you can also select "Infinite".

Rounds: Only available on drag races and A-to-B tracks. Defines how often you want to drive the track in a row. Select "Infinite" to practice without a limit.

Time limit: Only available on drift races. Defines how much time you will have to drift. Select "Infinite" to practice without a limit.

Every unlocked race type, map and track will be available, the others will be marked as locked.

On the right half of the screen you can see your currently selected car and its statistics. At the top you can scroll through the gallery of cars you own and select the one you want to race with. Next to your car's statistics you will see six buttons, three for styling and three for performance. Just like the control mapping sets in the options menu (see *Part B, 4.4. Control Settings*), these buttons toggle up to three sets of styling and performance setups for your car. This way you can configure the same car for optimal Drift mode and simulation racing performance, as an example, and recall these settings on the fly.

On the bottom of the screen you can start the session by pressing the "Start" button. "Replay" will let you save the last race if you own a replay medium. "Options" lets you see the options menu and "Exit" leaves Practice mode, returning to the main menu.

3.2. How Practice Mode Differs From Other Game Modes

Practice is a mode for everyone. Beginners should start practicing immediately to improve their knowledge of specific tracks and learn to drive their car in Arcade and Simulation VS. There is nothing more humiliating for a racer than to take part in an online race and screw up right from the start because you have no clue how to drive your car! Practice mode lets you get familiar with every new map, new track and new car you have unlocked or purchased. Test driving a car may be useful, but once you bought it, get on the tracks and improve your lap times. Sometimes you can improve by racing and earn some points in the time, but this requires you to be able to drive your car reasonably good enough not to mess up the whole race. So no matter whether you are a newbie or a pro, practicing is always a good idea.

4. Mission Mode

Mission is actually quite a large game mode which encompasses different challenges. There is the Career, Driving Challenges and Tasks, and all of those will get you points in no time, so doing missions is always worth the effort.

4.1. Mission Mode Menu Options

The menu screen is split into several parts here, but can be categorized in left and right halves. On the left you will always see the same information and buttons, regardless of the mission type you are selecting. At the top you can see the mission title, followed by the type of challenge and the goals to achieve – the goals are printed further down in the few sentences describing the mission, including the car to use and the time limit.
If a specific car is printed here, the game will provide the car to you for the mission, regardless of whether you own it or not. If it says "Car: own", this means you have to use your own car for this mission – in this case, hover the mouse cursor over the tab saying "Your Cars" at the top right of the screen and select the car that you prefer. If it says "Car: own" but the goal description suggests to use a specific car, the game requires you to drive that car as your own, but often it only means that you must test drive the car in the shop to accomplish a Task (more on Tasks in a moment).

Below the description is the reward you will get when you accomplish the selected mission. The reward can be Experience Points, Race Points, Mission Bonus Keys (in the Career) or starter cars (in the Career). At the bottom you can see four buttons.

Play: Hit the big VCR play button to start the selected mission. The mission must be unlocked to be playable.

Unlock: If the selected mission is locked, you can unlock it with a Mission Bonus Key.

Drop: Drops an accomplished mission and locks it again. You can unlock and replay the mission to get the reward another time.

Accomplish: If you have won a Green Key in Explorer mode or bought a Skeleton Key in the shop, you can use these keys with this button to accomplish any mission you want and get the reward without even driving once. The Skeleton Key does not even require you to unlock the desired mission first. Usually used to get through missions that seem too hard to be done.

On the right side of the screen you can select the missions to either unlock, drop or play them. Missions which have a visible lock on them are locked, unlike missions which are open and can be selected (changing color). If there is an "Accomplished" stamp on a mission, you have either successfully completed this mission or used the Green Key or Skeleton Key on it.

Selecting "Career" at the top will display the Career missions while "Task" will display the Task missions. Both mission types will have to be unlocked with red Mission Bonus Keys (indicated by the red lock), and can later be dropped. The same goes for "Driving Challenges" which must be unlocked with yellow Mission Bonus Keys (yellow lock). You will earn a red key after cumulatively gaining 7000 Experience Points by racing in any mode, while yellow keys are earned by cumulatively driving 75 miles in races. You can also get both keys as rewards in the Explorer race type.

You cannot unlock a higher mission if you have not completed the one before it; for example, unlocking mission 2 is not possible if you have not accomplished mission 1 first. Since the Task and Driving Challenge missions are in groups of four, you can of course unlock the first mission in every row on the screen. To see more missions, click on "Next Page" below.

The "Skill Test", "Tutorials" and "Endurance Test" buttons on the Driving Challenge screen are nonfunctional at the moment, but will surely offer some additional content in later versions of the game. The Career cannot be played beyond chapter 2 at the moment, too.

If you want to use a Backpack item (see *Part E, 5. Backpack Items*) for a mission, you can do so by entering the Backpack screen via the "Backpack" button on the bottom. Next to it is the "Exit" button which will quit Mission mode and return to the main menu.

4.2. Playing the Career

The Career is a good starting spot to earn some points for relatively simple tasks such as completing checkpoints in a limited time, avoiding collision with trackside objects, and even racing against computer-controlled cars. The Career works around a kind of story

involving a mysterious syndicate that you apparently must get into, and to do that, you have to beat Ted Cutter, the top dog in the syndicate.

The mascot girl Sylvi keeps telling you what happens next in the story and the races, and even though it all comes off like a simple attempt to copy recent Need for Speed games, the races are quite a bit of fun and will cover a lot of territory – you will get to check out maps and tracks that will be locked for quite a while, sometimes even drive cars that cannot be purchased without Aeria Points. Also, you will earn Race Points, Experience Points, Mission Bonus Keys and all the other three class 1 starter cars! The keys can then be used to unlock more Career missions, Tasks and Driving Challenges to get even more points!
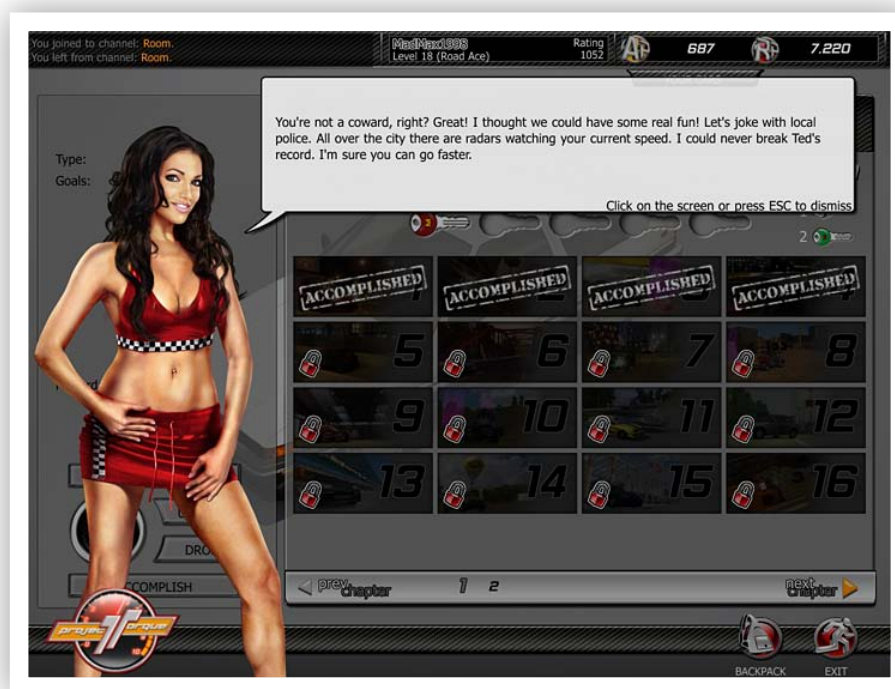
Accomplishing missions in the Career is easy. The first mission is the tutorial which you have to repeat and complete if you cancelled it on your first run. The tutorial will reward you with 800 Race Points, which is a lot! After this, you will have to use a red Mission Bonus Key to unlock mission two. The game gives you five red keys to start with and it is up to you to decide what to use them for. Completing mission two will allow you to unlock mission three, and so on. You can drop an accomplished mission with the "Drop" button, resetting and locking it again. Dropped missions can be replayed after they have been unlocked another time, which means that you will again get 800 points for the tutorial, and all the other awards! Obviously the developers are planning to extend the Career with more chapters, so we will just have to wait and see what the next chapters will offer.

4.3. Unlocking and Playing Tasks

Tasks are goals that must be reached within a specific race type, on a specific map or track, or within a specific car. The difference between Tasks and Driving Challenges is that once a Task is unlocked, you cannot "play" it in the sense of the word. The Task will be accomplished if you reach the goal in any race that meets the demands of the Task. For example, if a Task says "reach 200 km/h on a Tokyo track" and prints "Car: own" below it, this means that you have to use your own car on any Tokyo track in any race type, online or single player, to go up to 200 km/h somewhere to accomplish the Task. So you could race other players in a class 4 car on City Tour #2 and easily reach the 200 km/h mark while racing, but you can also practice on a Tokyo track just to reach that goal and complete the Task. If no specific track or race type is demanded, you can even test drive a car fast enough to accomplish Tasks, like the ones saying "jump off a ramp and fly x meters".

4.4. Unlocking and Playing Driving Challenges

Unlike Tasks, Driving Challenges can be played right after they are unlocked by hitting the VCR-like "Play" button. In most cases the car will be supplied to you and you have to reach the goal in this car, in a limited time. Some challenges will require you to use your own car which then has to be fast enough to handle the mission. Driving Challenges are the most rewarding missions, starting at 1500 Race Points for the simplest and going up to 3500 for the hardest challenge type. However, completing the hardest level can seem impossible, which is why a new Mission Bonus Key can also be used to drop and unlock a previously completed challenge to gain Race Points easily.

5. Racing Online

Once you are comfortable with your starter car and the basic tracks, or if you have already played the Career and leveled up a bit, it is time to go online. The true Project Torque MMOG takes place on the web! Racing online requires you to know a few things if you want to fully enjoy the online experience.

5.1. Race Type Selection

After you hit the "Play" button in the main menu, you will be taken to the channel screen where you can select a race type channel you want to play on. Currently there are two

channels for Simulation VS and Arcade VS, but there is only one for every other race type. If channels are locked, this is because you have not reached the level required to unlock the race type of that channel. You will have to level up further to be able to enter this channel.

On the left you can see a description of the race type the channel offers. You can also read the general scoring rules here telling you what gives you the most points.

Every channel has a user limit. The number of users currently on the channel is displayed on the yellow indicator bar. If a channel is full, you need to take the backup channel (currently only available for Simulation VS and Arcade VS). If there are any friends of yours on a channel, you will see the number of friends indicated next to the friend symbol. Each channel hosts several races which you will get to see when you enter it.

5.2. Joining a Room

Once you select a channel, you will see the races going on in that channel. Every race is categorized in a "room", a place where players meet, start the race, finish it and return to the meeting spot. Every bar represents a room. The various symbols and text on a room bar tell you the following:

Status symbol (a) – the icon on the very left which changes to reflect the event currently happening in the room. If it is a green car, no race is in progress at the moment and you may be able to join. If there is a bubble with a key instead, you can only enter this room if you know the password set by the host. A red car indicates that the players are at the loading screen and you cannot join. A red progress bar tells you that a race has started and how long it will take.

Status background (b) – the color behind the status symbol, indicating whether or not you can join the room. If it is gray, the room is open and you can join. Yellow means that you can only join if you change your car to meet the category, class or model demanded by the room. If the background is orange, you will not be able to join because you do not own the car demanded by the room. A red background, usually with the progress bar

icon, means that a race is in progress at which point you cannot join any longer. Joining races in progress is only possible if the room supports voting, in which case the other three colors may appear.

Voting symbol (c) – the orange checkbox saying "Vote" next to the status symbol. If this icon appears, the room has voting enabled (see *5.8. Voting*). You will be able to join a voting-enabled room even if the race is in progress (no red background color) to wait for the end of the race and cast your vote for the next race in which you will participate.

Map symbol (d) – the bigger icon next to the status symbol. Displays a country flag and a symbolic sketch of the map.

Tokyo	England	Serpentine	Circuit
Mud	Hangar	Construction Zone	Tokyo Highway
California Raceway	San Francisco Marina	Tanzawa	Shanghai Rooftop
Python Creek	Sunbay Speedway		
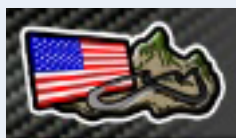
Room title (e) – the large text next to the map symbol. Set by the host to describe the purpose of the room.

Track name (f) – the smaller text under the title, telling you which track is currently selected by the host.

Number of players (g) – the x/y figure which indicates how many players are in the room and how many are allowed.
Number of laps (h) – below the player number, indicating how many laps will be driven on the selected track.

Rating limit (i) – often there is no limit, then it will say "No rating limit". If there is a limit, it will be indicated by two numbers, for example "Rating: 916-1116". Your rating (see *Part D, 3.1. Rating Explained*) has to fall in between these two numbers to join. If your rating does not match the demand, the text will have red background color.

Rating change (k) – below the rating limit, telling you whether rating change is on or off.

Car restriction (m) – next to the rating limit, indicating which cars can join. If it says "No restriction", you can join with any car. "Same category" means that only street, offroad, race or drift cars are allowed, depending on what car the host is driving. "Same class" requires you to select a car from the same class as the host. "Same car" means that you must select the same car as the host. If you do not own the right car for the demand, you will not be able to join and the background will be red.

Ghost mode (n) – this tells you whether or not Ghost is active.

Strongest car in room (o) – indicated by a car class sticker or model logo, this informs you of the most powerful car that is currently in the room. This helps you decide if you want to join with a lower/higher class or lower/higher power car, or if your car meets the room's demand. On the Thunder Alley channel, the class sticker is replaced by the car's model name ("Rookie", "Pro", "Intimidator") to indicate which car is allowed to race in the room.

Joining a room is easy: just pick the one you want to enter and click on the room bar. To see who else is in the room before you join, right-click on the bar. If you want to join as a spectator, tick the "Join as spectator" box at the bottom of the screen. If there is a buzzing sound coming back and nothing happens, you are not allowed to join for the following reasons:
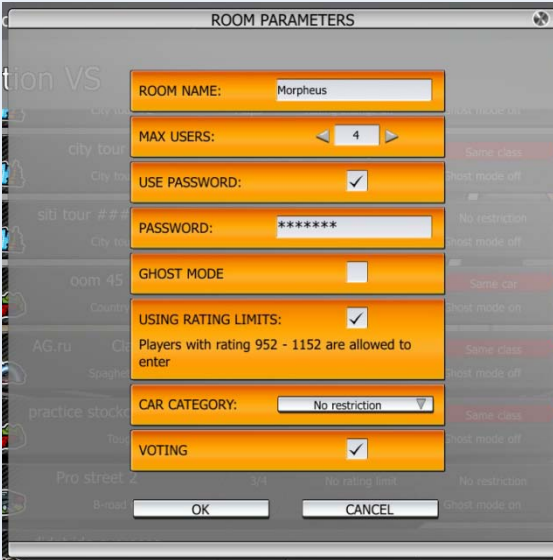
- The race is in progress and the room does not have voting enabled.
- You do not know the password for the room.
- Your rating is too low or too high.
- You do not own the car required to join.
- You have been banned from the room by the room host.

You can join any room as a spectator, regardless of its status. As spectator you will not participate in the race, but watch it instead ("spectate" the race). If you successfully join a room and you did not opt to be a spectator, it is important to check whether you really joined as a player or became a spectator while joining. This can happen if you select a room with a map or track you have not unlocked yet! It can also happen if the host

switched maps or tracks at the moment when you were joining. If you became a spectator, you will enter the room with a transparent car and there will be a camera icon and red text in the top left corner of the screen, saying "you became a (drop-in) spectator" or telling you that you need more Experience Points (XP) to race on the current track.

5.3. Creating a Room

If you do not want to join an existing room or there are no rooms available, you can easily create and host your own. Click on the "Create" button in the bottom left corner of the screen and enter the room parameters in the window.

Room Name: Enter the title of the room here, describing its purpose or simply giving it a cool name.

Max Users: Define how many players are allowed at maximum in this room.

Use Password: Check the box to toggle password protection on or off.

Password: Enter the password you want other players to enter when they want to join your room. This will only have an effect if the "Use Password" checkbox is ticked. Only players who know the password will be able to join your room, so you can keep other players out and race with friends.

Ghost Mode: Check the box to toggle Ghost mode on or off.

Using Rating Limits: Check the box to allow only players with a specific rating (see *Part D, 3.1. Rating Explained*). The rating will be preset by the game to a range of -100 and +100 relative to your own rating.

Car Category: Select whether you want to restrict the car category, car class or car model of other players. Only players with cars within the same category (street, offroad, race, drift) or class as your car will be able to join, or they will need the same car that you drive. "No restriction" opens the room to all cars.

Voting: Check the box to enable or disable voting in this room (see *5.8. Voting*).

Click on "OK" to create the room.

5.4. Room Interface

Whether you joined a room or created one, you will now enter a parking lot where all the players gather before going to the track. Every player joining the room will be represented by their car appearing in the parking lot. Your local daytime will be reflected as well – when you play at night, the parking lot will be dark and if you played all night through until the sun rises, this will be simulated as well!
On top of every player's car you can see their nickname, their level and a little red cross which turns into a green tick when they toggle "ready". Ready means that they have finished their preparations and want to go race. Unless the host of the room toggles ready, the race will not start (more on this later). Once the host says ready, all players have five seconds left to complete their preparations before the race starts. Regardless of that, everyone (ready and not ready) will be brought to the track to race.

You can toggle ready by clicking on the "Ready" button in the bottom left corner of the screen. You can undo this by clicking the button again, which will set your status back to "not ready". If you want to switch cars after toggling ready or do something else (like changing the track as the host), you have to undo your ready status first. You will revert back to "not ready" when another player enters the room or if the host changes his car, the map or the track. If you are not ready when the host starts the countdown and you change your car while it runs, the countdown will be stopped – this is to prevent players

from changing to a high class car in a low class room at the last second and gaining an unfair advantage.

Next to "Ready" there is a button called "Camera" which will let you view the scene from different angles. "Replay" will let you save the last race if you own a replay medium. With "Backpack" you can insert Backpack items (see *Part E, 5. Backpack Items*) to take with you to the race, and "Exit" leaves the room.

Apart from the regular car selection tab which is called "Select Car" here, you can choose the styling and performance set of your car just like in Practice mode. On the right edge of the screen you will also see four bigger tabs: "Game", "Room", "Maps" and "Users". Clicking on each of them will open the following options. Note that many of these options can only be modified by the room host and are read-only to guests.
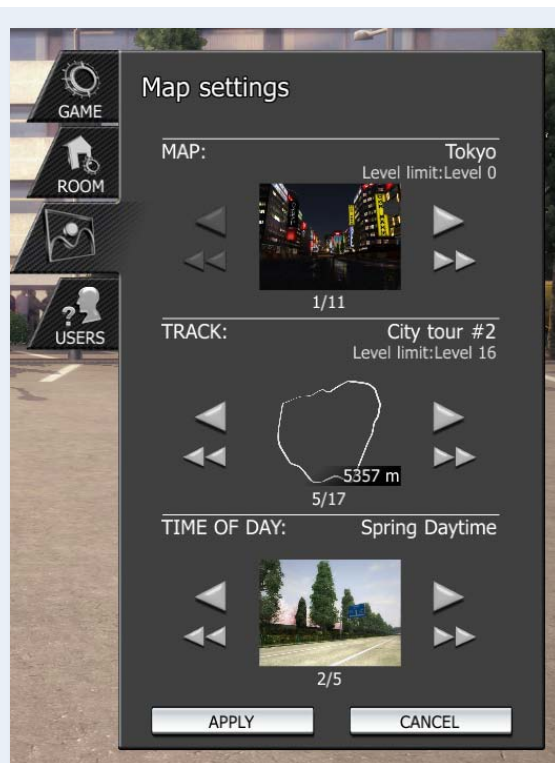
 "Game" tab – shows the room name, the game mode, the number of ready players and spectators, the rating limit if there is one, the minimum number of users, and whether Ghost mode is on. Lets the host define the laps for the next race.

"Room" tab – the options on this tab are the same described further above in 5.3. Creating a Room, and can only be modified by the host.

"Maps" tab – lets the host select the map to play the next race on, as well as the track and time of day. If you are the host and you select a map or track which at least one other player in the room has not unlocked, the game will notify you of this with red text on the tab. Changing the map or track will reset the number of laps on the "Game" tab to default.

"Users" tab – shows you the list of players currently in the room, spectators included. The first player on the list, printed in red, is the host. The host's nickname above his car is also printed in red. The red cross or green tick indicate the ready status of each player. If a camera is displayed instead, the user is a spectator. A steering wheel icon means that the player is currently on the track.

You can view detailed information about any player on the list by right-clicking on a name. The tab will update and show you all kinds of info including the player's current Backpack. If you are the room host, you will also see a "Kick" button here allowing you to remove the player from your room for any reason.

5.5. Common Things That Can Happen in a Room

The first thing you might be wondering is, "why is it important to check if I am a spectator?" The answer is simple: say you are on a lower level and you have not yet unlocked all the Tokyo tracks. You see a room with a Tokyo track and join, not knowing that the track is not yet unlocked for you – who can memorize all the track names and whether or not they are unlocked, right? What will happen is, you will join the room and think you are in the race as a player, but you have just become a spectator because the track selected by the host is not yet unlocked for you. The same happens if you try to join a room with a map you have not yet unlocked. The game gives you a chance to look at the map by spectating the race, but you may not participate.

This "silent spectator" switch is made worse by the fact that the host of a room can change the map, track and other parameters on the fly using the tabs I just explained. So if the room was created with the default Tokyo map, the map will have to be switched by the host at a time when the room already exists, and players may already join. If you see the room and it says "Tokyo", you can join as a player if the track is unlocked for you. But if the host has just switched the track or the map at the same moment, you will become a spectator and the host will never know you even tried to join! So if you are joining a race and come in as a spectator, check what map and track are selected after you came in – they might have been changed to something you have not unlocked.

Another important thing to know is the way Project Torque handles the ready status. In a nutshell, it works like this:

- The host decides when the race starts. If he says ready, there is a short five second countdown until the loading screen comes up. The race will start with all players in the room, be they ready or not.
- However, if all players have toggled ready and the host is the last to say ready, the race will start immediately.
- If all players have toggled ready and the host does not respond, the game will wait a *long* time before it finally decides that the host has probably left the computer, and

start the race automatically. The host will be on the track, but if he really is "AFK" (away from keyboard, which is what the game marks the host with), his car will simply stand at the starting line.

Once the game is loading the track, it will wait for all players to have it fully loaded before the race starts. This is displayed on the loading screen by text saying "waiting for [player name]" or "waiting for x players". It rarely happens that the loading screen will sit there for a long time because a player is suffering from connection problems, but if it does, do not panic and do not shut the game down, it will eventually finish loading.

5.6. What Happens During a Race

An online race will always go the same way: the race will start, people will crash (if Ghost mode is off), they will use chat macros to say "hi" and type messages, and generally drive like an AI never would. It is important to remember that whatever happens in a race, these are people you race with and if they mess up and hit you, it may have just been an accident and they might say sorry via the chat. At the same time, they could be ramming you intentionally in which case simply leaving them alone and concentrating on the race would be your best option – after all, you are not only racing for the win, you will gain points for every driven mile! You will lose these points if you decide to leave the race and your reliability level will go down, too – this value determines, in percent, how often you leave races before they finish. A reliability of 99% is perfect, but this may change if you leave just because someone rammed you off the track. Remember, it is always a good idea to finish a race as you will always get points!

Speaking of points, how you get them depends on the race type you are playing. Simply look for the scoring information in the race type description before you enter the channel. Every race type offers bonus points, though: in traditional races, the track will be split in sectors (often marked with checkpoints) and clearing a sector without scratching your car (i.e. without hitting anything) will reward you with "clean sector bonus" points. In Thunder Alley races, doing the most overtakes of the race will give you an "overtaking bonus" and in practically all lapped races there is a "best lap time bonus". Of course, winning a race will always increase your points even more.

If a player has connection problems during the race, his car may start to jump and fall back or even collide with other cars although he never did anything wrong. This happens because the game tries to keep the car where it is supposed to be on the track, but the reduced data it gets from the client with the bad connection will make things difficult and lead to these intermediate dropouts. Stay away from players with jumpy cars to avoid crashes.

Once the first player has crossed the finish line and won the race, the game will give all other players about 13 seconds to reach the line. Whoever does not make it to the line in this time will not qualify with a position and will be marked with "Did Not Finish" (DNF), resulting in less points.

In many races where the host or another nice player has a faster car than the other players, that player may remember the Project Torque Racing Etiquette (see *Part G, 5.1. General Etiquette in Online Racing*) and stop his car before he crosses the finish line. Such players do this to give others a better chance of reaching the finish line in time. They will wait until they see that the second-placed driver is closing in on them, then drive over the line and claim their victory. Their lap time may be lost for them, but these players want a fair chance for everyone who drove fast enough to reach the line after the second-placed driver crossed it. While this behavior should never be expected from a player or a host, it is nice to see that some players follow this unwritten suggestion.

5.7. Finishing a Race

After you have finished, the game will display statistics while it waits for other players to cross the finish line. Once all players are through, it may or may not happen that the first three players are given a podium sequence: the game displays a podium with the avatars of the first three standing on their position, each holding a bottle of champagne. A countdown will be displayed and once it has reached zero, the three players can shake their bottles by rapidly moving their mouse left and right. Once the bottles pop, each player gets a random amount of bonus Race Points, depending on how fast they were shaking. So if you have made it in the top three and the sequence appears – shake the mouse!
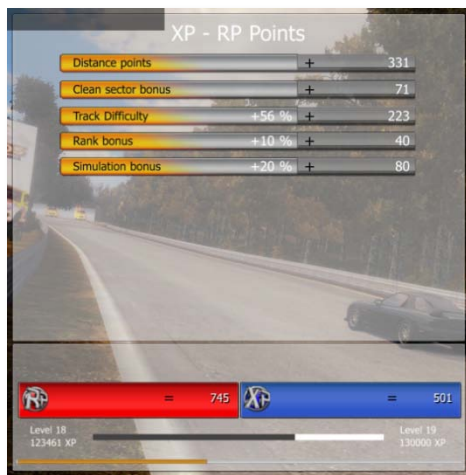
After the sequence (or after the race is finished), the game will display the points you have earned in the race. It will add all the bonuses and the points you get for the driven miles, and display the total amount on the bottom. Often the amount of Experience and Race Points is the same, but if you had the podium sequence, these bonus points will increase your Race Points result. If there is a "rush hour" going on at the time of the race, which is a feature enabled at certain days or times by GameMasters or developers, the points may be further increased by a fixed percentage (10% to 15% are common) which is clearly displayed with graphics.

If the room does not have voting enabled, the game will now return you back to the parking lot where you can stay for the next race or leave. Notice that the next race may be a repetition of the last, but it can also be something totally different, depending on what the host decides. You can also save a replay of the race you just finished by clicking on the "Replay" button now.

5.8. Voting

Voting is a commonly used tool in multiplayer games which allows players to have a say about what happens next. In racing games, voting is used to select the track the next race will be driven on. Voting always takes place at the end of a race and enables all players in the room, including those not currently on the track, to cast their vote on the map and track they want to race on next. Project Torque randomly selects three tracks which can be on up to three different maps, and also assigns a random time of day to them. The number of laps for every track is based on the distance of the race the room has started with: a short track with many laps in the first race will make the game select many laps for short and fewer laps for long tracks to equalize the distance, although this is also limited by the maximum allowed number of laps per track.
Players cast their vote by clicking on the track they desire. They can also vote to stay on the current track, which makes a total of four voting options. The time limit for voting is approximately 20 seconds and any players who did not vote will be dragged along. If you want to be surprised by the next track, just sit back and wait for the countdown to be over; you do not have to vote!
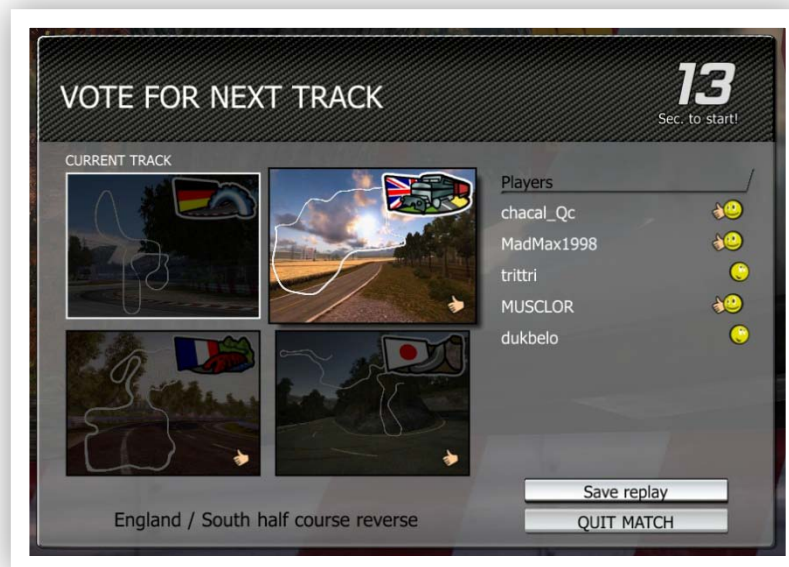
Sometimes several tracks get an equal amount of votes, especially with fewer players. If two or more tracks are tied for the win, the game will randomly select one and begin loading. If you want to make a difference and not leave it to the game, you can give your vote to one of the tied tracks instead of your preferred one (if it is another) to make that track the winner.

As you can see, the voting system keeps the racing going by jumping directly from track to track. Players finish the race, perhaps do the podium sequence, gather their points and vote, then it is off to the next race. You will not be returned to the parking lot after a race like in rooms without voting. For this reason, it is important to note what you can and cannot do in a voting-enabled room:

- You can leave the room after a race by clicking on "Quit Match" on the voting screen.
- You can save a replay of the last race by checking the "Save replay" box on the voting screen. Naturally this requires you to own a replay medium.
- You can "quick shop" on the voting screen. Hover over an icon with the mouse to see the description of the item and right-click to buy it. Items will be randomly selected by the game and will often be Backpack items.
- You cannot change your car for the next race as this would require you to drop back to the parking lot. If you want to change cars, leave the room and rejoin.
- If you decide to host a voting-enabled room, keep in mind that you will have no control over the tracks as the game will automatically react to the voting. Of course you can cast your own vote as well!
- The game will only return to the parking lot if all players leave except for one. The remaining player becomes the new host and needs to wait for new players in the parking lot before racing can commence again.

Since a voting-enabled room never drops back to the parking lot unless enough players leave, you can join such a room even if racing is in progress (the background color of the status symbol is not red). Of course you need the right car to join and the status of this will be displayed by the gray, yellow and orange backgrounds. Once you join a room where a race is currently happening, you will enter the parking lot the usual way and find all players standing there, but if you check the user list, you will see steering wheel icons next to their names, indicating that they are in fact on the track and racing. You can either wait until the current race is over and the voting screen comes up, or click on the "Join" button at the bottom left to go to the track and spectate until the end of the race. You can then regularly vote and enter the next race as a driver.

5.9. Leaving a Room: Dynamic Hosting

When the host decides not to continue the room and leaves, the room will dissolve – but only if there are no other players in it. So if three players joined and raced, and the host decides to leave the room after the race, the three players will still be in and the room will not dissolve. Instead, the player second on the user list will become the new host. This means that if you are the second player (look at the "Users" tab to find out) and the host leaves, you will become the new host (marked with a red nickname) and you will be able to change the room parameters, the map and track, and it also falls to you to start the race when all players are ready. If you want to hand hosting over to another player, simply leave the room and return – the next player below you on the list will be the new host.

6. License Test

License tests are the only mandatory driving challenges in Project Torque. You have to complete these tests if you want to level up beyond a certain limit. While these tests need preparation and concentration, they can be fun too.

6.1. Purpose of the License Tests

Leveling up in Project Torque is done by earning Experience Points. However, levels are also categorized in racer classes, with the lowest class being "Student" and the highest being "Champion". The classes between these extremes are called "Road Runner", "Road Racer", "Road Ace", "Street Hazard", "Street Racer", "Street Legend", "Circuit Driver", "Circuit Pro" and "Professional". To reach the next class, you will have to take and complete a license test. Of course tests for higher classes become more difficult. Unfortunately there is currently a level cap when you reach the points necessary to get to level 41. This means that Circuit Driver is the highest possible class at the moment and going above level 40 (doing the Circuit Pro license test) is impossible. However, since the leveling system will be reworked in a future version of Project Torque, we can expect this to be resolved later.

The racer classes and the tests were included in the game to prevent casual and incapable players from harming the online experience of more serious and determined players who want to race with greater skill. The premise is, if you want to become a better racer and take on the pros on the server, you need to prove your value and show the game that you are good enough to enter the higher racer class, which allows you to unlock more stuff and go to more difficult races. If you cannot be bothered by working a bit to complete the license test, you will not level up and remain a student.

6.2. Practice and Application Forms
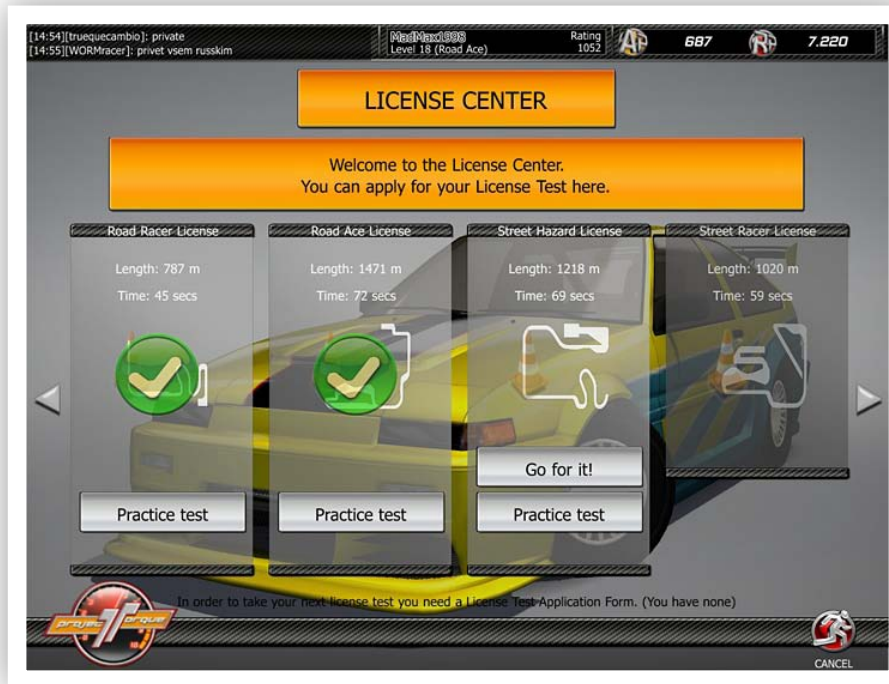
Once you have gained the points necessary to reach level 6, this will be the first time to take a license test. Click on the "License" button in the main menu to get to the License Test game mode screen, the License Center. Before you can take the first test, you will have to do two things: first, practice the test by clicking on "Practice test", which will take you to the track to either watch the instructor do the test (click on "Instructor") or try it yourself. After you completed the test in practice, you will also have to buy an application form before you can do the real test. An application form costs Aeria or Race Points and is valid for exactly *one* attempt. If you think you are ready for the test, click on "Go for it!" to start. Good luck!

6.3. License Test Stages

You will have to take a license test after you gained enough Experience Points to reach the next racer class. If you attempt to take the next test before you have enough points, the game will tell you how many you still need to earn. The levels at which you will need to take a license test are as follows:

Level 6: Road Runner License
Level 11: Road Racer License
Level 16: Road Ace License
Level 21: Street Hazard License

Level 26: Street Racer License
Level 31: Street Legend License
Level 36: Circuit Driver License

The license test map will always be the same, but the obstacles will be more difficult to corner with each higher license. The Circuit Pro, Professional and Champion license tests are not available yet because of the aforementioned level cap.

6.4. How to Complete a License Test

Every test follows the same rules: get through the course before the time runs out and do not hit any obstacles, cones or barriers.

Completing a license test requires that you get familiar with the track before you actually take the test. This is why the game does not allow you to take a test before you have successfully practiced it at least once. It is also important to understand how the car works. Since every license test is driven in the same car, the Toyota Corolla GT-S, getting used to its handling will help you complete the next test faster than the first. The Corolla is not easy to drive as it is lightweight and has a high power-to-weight ratio, meaning that the horsepower coming from the rear wheels when you step on the gas will easily let the tail spin out. Some people love the Corolla for this while other people dislike it. In the license tests, the sensible driving model of the Corolla will force you to concentrate on how much throttle you apply when going out of corners, how hard to brake before entering one, and how fast you actually should be going. If you feel you can take a sharp corner at 60 km/h and the tail spins out hitting a cone, the test will be over and you will know that 60 km/h is simply too fast. So the thumb rule for the license tests is: never go too fast! You can beat the time limit much easier if you drive clean corners.

Also note that the Corolla will be upgraded with visual and performance parts in later license tests, which will affect its driving model. Later test tracks might be more difficult, but the car will actually drive better because of the upgrades.

Now that you know everything about the game modes and race types in Project Torque, you still need to learn how the roleplaying system works. Let's get over to the next chapter!

Part D:

The Roleplaying Game

In this part all the terms like "Experience Points" and "Rating", which have been floating around in this guide until now, will be fully explained. Since you now know the basics of racing in Project Torque, you can enjoy the game and earn some points, then come back here if you feel like reading more.

1. Leveling Up

As you are probably aware by now, Project Torque employs a system that lets players increase their virtual "skills and rights" in the game. They do this by earning points, which is done by racing or by accomplishing missions. As mentioned in the first chapter of this guide, there are three types of points: Aeria Points, which can be bought with real money and invested in items in the game; Race Points, which are usually earned through racing, completing missions or receiving bonuses; and Experience Points, which is what you will need to increase your level. The level determines what you may and may not do in the game and to which things you have access. Racing more will make you a better driver and increase your level, opening up more content to you which in turn will challenge you even more, further increasing your skills and your level.

1.1. Experience Points (XP) and How to Get Them

Experience Points, or XP for short, are indicated with a blue dot saying "XP" in the game. You can check the amount of your XP in the main menu, on the right pane where your statistics are displayed. There you will also see how many XP are needed for you to rise to the next level, and which items will be unlocked.

You cannot purchase or win Experience Points since they are what they are, points given for game experience. Whenever you race online, every driven mile will mean experience and will be rewarded with XP. Many bonuses you gain when doing things like the best lap time are awarded as Race Points, but often as Experience Points too. Also, playing the Career in Mission mode (see *Part C, 4.2. Playing the Career*) can get you some XP in several missions. In summary, racing will make you more experienced with every mile and the better you are, the more XP you will receive.

Once you have reached a specific number of XP, you will automatically level up to the next stage. This can be as little as 360 points to get from level 1 to level 2, but it can also be as huge as 200,000 points from level 31 to level 32! The amount of XP required for the next level becomes larger as you get better.

1.2. Unlocking Items

While the very early levels will unlock nothing, later levels (starting at level 3) will reward you for your experience by giving you access to new content. When you begin Project Torque, only a handful of maps and tracks will be available and race types other than Arcade VS will be locked. But once you level up a few stages, the game will quickly open up its full range of maps, tracks and race types to you. Once you reach level 8, you will be

allowed to race Thunder Alley, a very nice way to quickly gain more Race and Experience Points. Many other items will be unlocked at that point too; however, you will have to play the game for quite a while to unlock the most interesting content, like City Tour #2 or Tanzawa.

1.3. How Your Level Affects Shop Items

Many of the cars in the shop and their upgrades will also not be available to you until you have played a fair bit of time. While they can be test driven at any time, you cannot buy them until you have reached a certain level which is different for every car. Usually higher class cars require higher levels, so should you want to buy a car early in the game, you cannot take the best of the best and win in unfair races against other rookie players. However, that is not to say that getting your dream car will take you months of playing! Even if a class 4 car requires you to reach level 13, a few hours of successful playing will easily get you to that. If you want to buy a car with Race Points, it will take you that much time anyway to save up the points needed!

1.4. How Your Level Affects Online Races

As explained in *Part C, 5.2. Joining a Room*, you will not be able to join rooms as a player where maps or tracks are run that you have not unlocked. If a room has no visible restriction, but the title clearly suggests that only players with a certain car class or level are accepted in, you have to be prepared to be thrown out when you join.

A rather positive effect of leveling up is that you will be rewarded slightly more points for a successful race than on low levels. So while it is still a long way to reach those 200,000 XP to get to level 32 from 31, at least the payout per race is a tad higher when you are at level 31.

1.5. License Tests

As I mentioned at the end of the last chapter, you will have to take and complete a license test for every fifth level you are reaching. The first test will be due if you want to get to level 6, but the test is after you have the XP needed for this level. The next will be five levels later, so before level 11, then level 16 and so on. If you do not take the test after gaining all the points for the next level, you will not level up and any additional points you would earn by racing are invalid.

1.6. List of XP Required for Each Level

This list is a rundown of all the cumulative Experience Points needed for each level. Cumulative means starting from zero and going up. You will not need to gain 600 points to get from level 1 to level 2, but it will be 600 points from the start of the game (360 from level 1):

Beginner:
Level 0 - 0 XP

Student:
Level 1 - 240 XP
Level 2 - 600 XP
Level 3 - 1,300 XP
Level 4 - 2,100 XP
Level 5 - 3,000 XP

Road Runner:
Level 6 - 4,600 XP
Level 7 - 6,100 XP
Level 8 - 8,000 XP
Level 9 - 11,000 XP
Level 10 - 14,000 XP

Road Racer:
Level 11 - 21,000 XP
Level 12 - 26,000 XP

Level 13 - 33,000 XP
Level 14 - 42,000 XP
Level 15 - 52,000 XP

Road Ace:
Level 16 - 71,000 XP
Level 17 - 86,000 XP
Level 18 - 110,000 XP
Level 19 - 130,000 XP
Level 20 - 150,000 XP

Street Hazard:
Level 21 - 200,000 XP
Level 22 - 240,000 XP
Level 23 - 280,000 XP
Level 24 - 330,000 XP
Level 25 - 400,000 XP

Street Racer:
Level 26 - 510,000 XP

Level 27 - 600,000 XP
Level 28 - 710,000 XP
Level 29 - 830,000 XP
Level 30 - 990,000 XP

Street Legend:
Level 31 - 1,300,000 XP
Level 32 - 1,500,000 XP
Level 33 - 1,800,000 XP
Level 34 - 2,100,000 XP
Level 35 - 2,500,000 XP

Circuit Driver:
Level 36 - 3,200,000 XP
Level 37 - 3,700,000 XP
Level 38 - 4,300,000 XP
Level 39 - 5,100,000 XP
Level 40 - 6,000,000 XP

This list was compiled by community forum moderator WyattEarp and comes from this thread.

2. Race Points (RP)

Leveling up unlocks stuff in Project Torque. But since driving Tanzawa with a Corus S3 is no fun, you can go into the shop and buy cars, upgrade and tune them, and purchase miscellaneous add-ons too, like Backpack items. Buying these things costs Aeria Points or, as an alternative in many cases, Race Points (RP). These are marked with a red dot saying "RP" in the game.

2.1. How to Get Race Points

You will get Race Points by racing, as the name suggests. Like with XP, race bonuses such as best lap time will give you more RP. Doing missions, especially Tasks and Driving Challenges, will reward you with a lot of RP (up to 3000) and there is even the podium sequence after some races that allows the top three players to shake their bottles for more bonus RP. How many points you get per race varies with its length and skill level. Longer and more complex tracks will award more points while race types like Thunder Alley and Explorer give you lots of points for the high mileage or the combos you make.

2.2. Saving Up for a Car

If you have visited the shop and test driven a car that you want to have, you can buy it with Race Points if it is not an AP-only car (a licensed car). Saving up your RP for this car may take a while, depending on how expensive the car is and whether or not you want to buy it with parts attached. However, when you look at the car in the shop, be aware of the level it requires to be bought. You may have so many RP already and you might be thinking about how to get the rest in the shortest time, but if the car requires you to level up five more stages, you can probably take all the time you need since earning many RP and little or no XP (like in missions) will not be enough. You first need to level up to be able to buy that car, and you may very well have the required RP until then.

2.3. Items Which Cannot be Bought With RP

 Cars that are recreations of licensed real-world models are not available for Race Points and will have to be bought with Aeria Points. This also goes for several other items, for example the Skeleton Key which is used to automatically accomplish missions – if this key were available for RP, players could exploit it by earning RP in a mission, buying the key, accomplishing the mission again, buying the key, and repeating. Sponsor Girls are another example of an AP-only item: they last for a limited time that starts with the purchase and increase your earned points (doubling them). Again, since these "items" do something with your RP, it would be illogical to buy them with RP.
In addition, you cannot buy gifts (see *Part E, 3.2. Buying a Gift for Another Player*) with RP. Since every player can gain RP on their own, gifts are exclusive to AP-only items and items which are paid with AP. If you want to buy a gift for someone, you need to have AP and use them.

3. Becoming an Experienced Racer

Once you have leveled up quite a bit, beaten a few license tests and driven enough miles on the various maps that you know most of them by heart; once you have learned to precisely control your car and maybe even drift it, your way of playing Project Torque may change. It is not all fun and games anymore, but you will want to go for lap records, host rooms for clean racing with other more experienced players, and generally tackle greater challenges. While not every experienced player is like that (I have driven some incredibly pointless and funny races with guys at level 35), players who have made it this far in Project Torque usually will not stop there. Some will try and pass on their experience to newer players, others will start driving cars they have never tried before to learn new things, and yet others will simply race fast and duke it out against other players in the top classes only, much like in real street racing. However, no matter what type of player you will be, as an experienced racer it falls to you to watch some things when you are going online to race.

3.1. Limiting Rooms

Rooms have filters to allow only a specific group of players to join. These filters are not many at the moment and they seriously lack rules like "only let players join who are between level x and y", but they are still useful if you want to host a room for players who are not new to the game.
At the moment, the best ways to limit rooms to specific players are the rating and the car class. While new players can drive cars above class 4, they need to reach at least a level above 9 to buy one of those. If you filter the car class when hosting a room and go in with a class 4 or higher car, you can be sure that no players below level 10 will join. If rating limits are enabled for the room, the players joining will match the statistical skill of your driving in a range of -100 to +100. While the rating may not always be a true value of skill, it does help to keep dirty players out. Also, selecting maps and tracks that require high levels will additionally filter new players out.
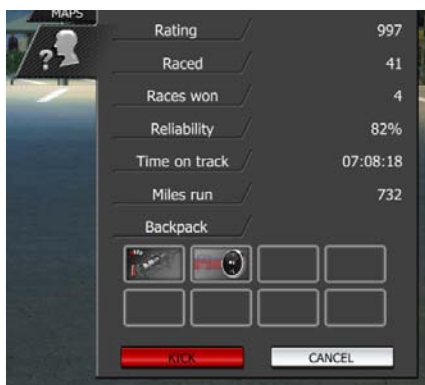
If players join and you do not want them to race with you, you have every right to throw them out if you have previously announced that only players of a specific level are allowed in (for example by naming your room something like "level 25+ only"). To throw a player out, either use the "Kick" button on the "Users" tab (right-click on the player in question) or open the chat, type *"/kick <player name>, <time in seconds>"* and hit Enter. Remember to be friendly

and do not cuss at players when they join; they may simply have missed to read the room title.

As further room filters are planned, it will become easier to limit rooms in future releases of Project Torque.

3.2. Creating Rooms for Lower Level Players

If you want to take the opposite direction and make rooms for lower level players, you have to consider some things. Keep in mind that many of the maps and tracks available to an experienced racer will not be available to players at lower levels, and setting up a track that many new players have unlocked will attract more of them. It is frustrating for a Project Torque newbie to look at the Simulation VS channel just to find Wangan and Tanzawa races there since he cannot join any of them (nor may he have the right car or skill).

Finally, if you want fair racing for new and experienced players alike, help new players to drive clean races. Do not allow Backpack items, turn on Ghost mode, and maybe even limit the race to a low car class so these players can concentrate on driving a car that they can handle, not worrying about crashing and when to best hit the nitro.

3.3. Respectful Driving

This is basically a repetition of the Project Torque Racing Etiquette. If you are experienced and another player is not, they may do stuff you would not expect from another more seasoned player. This may not always be intentional; the newer player may simply have to adjust to a new car or track, and some people prefer to do this in races instead of Practice mode. Regardless, if anything happens that disturbs you and you have no clue why the younger player did it, talk to them. Unless they turn out to be real asses, be friendly to them and tell them what they did wrong. Give them a chance to redeem themselves. Making mistakes is part of learning to drive fast in Project Torque, and these mistakes happen in real racing as well. If the new player you are racing with simply cannot control his car or shows other signs of having trouble, encourage them to keep trying by waiting for them. Keep the chat going with fun messages or even turn the whole race into a fun event. You may be a serious racer against your own kind, but sometimes it can be fun to race with players who are fresh out of license test 1.

To become an experienced racer, you also need some more cars and parts. The topic of the next chapter: shopping!

Part E:

Shopping

This part will discuss the shop in detail. How does it work? What items can you buy? What is the difference between Aeria Points and Race Points, and what do you do with your Backpack? It will all be explained here!

1. The Shop

The shop is only one click away from the main menu and can also be accessed from many other menu screens. It allows you to buy cars and parts with Aeria Points (AP) or Race Points (RP).

1.1. Shop Menu Interface

The shop screen is split in two parts, this time horizontally: the upper half displays your car or the car of your choice, reflecting any changes you make to the selected car – from repainting and installing vinyls to changing parts. You can zoom in on the car with your mouse wheel and you can grab and turn the car in any direction by clicking and dragging the mouse. This way you can view the car from any angle and see everything you need to see.

On the bottom half you can see the parts and cars you can buy. A maximum of ten items are displayed at once, with two rows each showing five, and the rows can be scrolled up and down with the arrow buttons on the right. Items are also categorized by tabs which can be clicked directly, while the subcategories appearing under them can also be scrolled with the smaller horizontal arrows.

On the bottom of the screen, you can see several buttons which will show you the global item types – cars, parts, upgrades, miscellaneous items, girls, and mission items. The tabs

available for each type will vary – if you display cars, you can see tabs such as "All cars", "Years", "Drive-trains" and "Categories". For basically all item types there are the tabs "On sale" and "New", which I will explain shortly.

When you hover the mouse cursor over an item or click on it, a description will appear on the left of the upper half of the screen. It shows you the level limit of the item, the price in AP and (if available) RP, and (again if available) any options you might have for the item, such as color boxes for car paint. You can click on the cart icon to purchase the items you have added. Items are automatically added to your cart once you have selected them by clicking on them, which will highlight the selected item with an orange background. To deselect an item and remove it from the cart, simply click on it again (you may have to click twice; make sure the orange background is removed). The total price of all items is displayed in AP and RP next to the cart icon, and there is also a gift icon that will be explained later.

1.2. Viewing Cars

Viewing your own cars works the same way as in many other menu screens: hover over the "Your Cars" tab on the top right of the screen to see the car gallery, and select one to load it up. If you want to view a car you do not own, click on the "Cars" button on the bottom bar and select one from the item list.
The car model will be loaded and displayed in the upper half of the screen. It can be freely viewed with the mouse as described above. To the right of the car you can see the full model name, the model and make logo, a small icon displaying the drive-train of the car, the class sticker and the performance specs. The specs will dynamically change as you install or remove parts from the car, showing you exactly how much a part added to a performance value. Left of the specs is the "Test Drive" button which allows you to check out any car in a free ride mode. Below you will again find the "Styling" and "Performance" set buttons, which allow you to switch sets for both categories and create specialized configurations for various applications to recall on the fly before racing.

1.3. Installing and Removing Parts and Upgrades

Installing parts to a car is very easy: select the car you want to upgrade, then click on the "Parts" or "Upgrades" button on the bottom bar. Choose from the various tabs which type of part you want to install, and select the subcategory to display its item list. For

example, installing a new hood would require you to click on "Parts", then on the "Body" tab and the "Hoods" subcategory. You could then select a hood from the item list.

Once you click on the item you want, it will be marked with an orange background which means that it has been added to your shopping cart, and it has also been automatically installed – no need to worry about handling with screwdrivers and wrenches yourself, just let the game do it! If the part was a visual modification to the body, the car model will be updated with the new part attached. If it was a performance or handling upgrade, the specs will change to reflect the additional value.

Just like when they were automatically installed, parts will be removed when you deselect them. If you do not like the hood you selected, switch to another – since only one hood can be installed, the new hood will be added and the old one removed from the cart. If you want to remove the new hood altogether and return to stock, click on the new, currently selected hood again to deselect it, and it will be removed from the car and your cart.

1.4. Test Drive

After you have found your dream car, outfitted it with parts, or upgraded your own car, you can take to the track and try before you buy. You have the option to select one of all three driving models – simulation, arcade or drift – as well as a limited number of maps. Currently these maps are Mud, Circuit, Sunbay Speedway (Thunder Alley) and the license test park. You will drive on these maps in Free Ride mode, meaning that you can do whatever you want. There is no track to follow, no direction to go, and no lap times to beat. Just take the time you need to explore the car and decide if you want to buy.

Test drive mode can also be used for real gameplay: some Tasks require you to select a specific car in the shop and test drive it. If a Task says that you can do it in any game mode, this includes test driving and you will be able to beat a difficult Task with a better car if the Task allows all cars, so select the best you can get and test drive it to complete your mission.

1.5. Items on Sale

Often there will be items marked as "new" or "on sale", depending on what the developers introduced. These items will always show up on the first two tabs of the same names. Of course they can also be found within their item category.

Items on sale have a reduced price tag, be it AP or RP. Since these offers are time-limited, you might want to consider taking the chance if a good car is offered for a lower price and you have just the money to afford it! Keep an eye out for the news ticker in the main menu as it will tell you when there are any items on sale.

1.6. Level Limits and Upgrade Stages

As I explained in Part D, your level affects shop items. Many items such as cars and performance upgrades have a level limit which is displayed under the item's description. This limit tells you what level you need reach before you can purchase this item. This was done for two reasons: firstly, to keep newbies away from supercars like the Panama GT or the Corvette, so that they would have to earn the experience required to effectively drive one of those. Secondly, upgrading your car happens in stages, and each stage requires a higher level so that you can slowly turn your car into a tuned racing machine, step by step as you gain more experience and level up.

The stages for upgrading usually go from 1 to 4, with stage 5 being an exception for only a few cars like the Corvette. The lower the level required for the car you are upgrading, the lower the requirement will be for upgrades. A Toyota Corolla GT-S can be tuned to stage 3 if you have reached level 16 since it is a class 1 car and only requires level 6 to be bought. The Corvette on the other hand requires level 21 to be purchased, which means that you will have to be a lot higher than that to fully upgrade this supercar.

Another thing that makes upgrading a step-by-step journey is that you have to upgrade from stage 1 onward, meaning that if you want to install stage 4 tires, you must purchase stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3 tires first. This will cost points for each of these stages even if 1 to 3 are not used after you have reached stage 4. Thankfully the pricing of the higher stage items is only minimally greater than the lower stages, so every higher stage only adds up another 110% or so of points per stage.

2. Aeria Points vs. Race Points

You can buy every item in the shop with Aeria Points (AP), no matter how small or large it is. Many items including non-licensed cars can be purchased with Race Points (RP) too, but this will cost significantly more per item. As mentioned early in this guide, Aeria Points cost real money and you have to buy them from Aeria Games, while Race Points are given to you as you do successful races in Project Torque. It is up to you how you acclaim your items, but here are some useful hints.

2.1. Why Items Cost More RP Than AP

The difference between AP and RP pricing is so large because the value of the item is reflected by the amount of "work" you have to do in the game to deserve that item. If you want to buy a class 4 car and it costs 79,000 RP, it will take quite a while and a lot of racing to get that amount of points together. However, if you want to take the easy way and get the car in an instant, you will have to pay some of your real-world money you have probably worked for as well. No matter how you do it, the game requires you to "work" (in real life as well as in the game) to get what you want. And since racing is much more fun and the whole purpose of Project Torque, you will simply have to get good at it and do a lot of it to prove that you stick with the game, so that you will be "recognized and rewarded" with the necessary points for your dream car. By contrast, spending 15 dollars on 1500 AP instantly gives you the car, but you need

to come up with the money first. And 15 dollars is not that little of an amount either, so the difference between AP and RP could be greater!

2.2. How to Get AP-Only Items

Purchasing items that cannot be paid with RP is practically only possible with real money as Aeria Points are rarely given away for free. But "rarely" does not mean "never", and so there are in fact other ways of getting these items or the AP required for them. Number one, events and contests. The community forums always have announcements from Aeria GameMasters or administrators who give away AP for free if you successfully take part in a contest. These range from things like "advertise our new game on YouTube" to "Corvette World Championship", meaning that it can be tasks to help Aeria get more players, but it can also be Project Torque events which take place in-game and naturally involve online racing. If you participate in such an event and compete with success, you might not just be awarded AP. Some event hosts also give away complete items which are often AP-only!

Opportunity number two is winning AP directly in Project Torque. Recently more prizes were added to the Explorer race type and one such prize are AP; however, the prize is valueless at the moment and does not really award points, something the developers claim will be changed later. Also, taking part in a Challenge race involves spending AP to get a ticket, but if you win the race or even come in second, you will be rewarded AP in turn. If enough players participate, finishing second may bring you some extra AP while covering your expenses, not to mention the bonus you get when winning.

3. Purchasing and Gifting Items

By default, the game will add any AP/RP items to the total RP amount displayed next to the cart icon, while AP-only items will be summed up in the total AP amount. AP/RP items will be added to the AP bill only if you have exhausted your RP and have enough AP left. This way the game makes sure that you will not spend any AP on things you could pay with RP, unless you explicitly decide to do so.

3.1. Paying Your Cart

Once you click on the cart icon to check out, you can select for each item whether you want to pay with AP or RP. Simply click on the little buttons saying "AP" or "RP" to select. If you want to remove an item from the cart before buying, click on "Drop". On the bottom of the window you will see your current AP/RP, the total amount to be paid and

what you will have left after the purchase. Once you are all set, click on "OK" to make the deal. The AP and RP will be deducted from your account and the items will be yours.

3.2. Buying a Gift for Another Player

If you have AP and want to present another player with a little something, for example a local friend for his or her birthday, you can use your AP to buy any item as a gift for this player. Gifts cannot be purchased with RP as outlined in *Part D, 2.3. Items Which Cannot be Bought With RP.*
After selecting the item or the items you want to buy, click on the gift icon instead of the cart icon. This will bring up a similar window like on checkout, but every item listed here displays its level, which the other player must be at to use it. You can try and make sure that the player who receives the gift is at the necessary level, but you can also send the gift to encourage your friend to reach the level he or she needs to claim the item!

To send the gift, first enter the nickname of the receiving player. If you are not sure how to spell his nickname, click on the letter icon to search for the name. If the game finds a match, it will display the player and his current level. Click on "OK" to select the player and the nickname will be entered correctly. In the message field you can leave a short text like "happy birthday, here's a new car for you" or something. Click on "OK" to send the gift. The receiving player will be notified when entering the game and be able to unpack the gift in the garage.

4. Managing Items in the Garage

After you have purchased some cars and parts, you can switch these in the garage. The interface is essentially the same as in the shop, but without anything to buy. You can find your parts in the same categories listed on the bottom bar and on the tabs.

4.1. Removing Parts From a Car

When you select a car, all the parts and upgrades attached to it will be active. If you feel that a part needs to be removed for a race, you can do so by selecting the part from the list and clicking on it to remove the orange background, deselecting and therefore uninstalling it from the car. This change will be saved, so the part will remain removed until you come back to the garage and reattach it.

4.2. Switching Parts

You may have bought several parts of the same category, for example forward and backward brake balancers. To switch these parts, simply deselect and remove the part you want switched from the car, and replace it by selecting the other part. You can easily change the look or handling of your car for different race types this way or create tuning sets you can recall on the fly. Just select from the "Set 1" through "Set 3" buttons and configure your car differently for each set.

5. Backpack Items

Your Backpack is a virtual space in your car that you take with you to every race. Backpack items can be put in here to be activated while the race is in progress. Backpack items include nitros, point doublers, flaming skidmarks, and a lot more.

5.1. How to Use Backpack Items

After you have bought a Backpack item in the shop, it will lie around until you put it in your Backpack. You can do this from most game mode screens before you go race. For example, if you are in a room and waiting for the race to start, you could access your Backpack before readying up and put a nitro in there: simply click on the nitro item on the Backpack screen and it will be included. When the race has begun, the items you took with you will automatically be activated and do their job throughout the race; only the aforementioned nitro will have to be triggered by you at will (press the nitro button). Backpack items often only last for a specific number of races or a specific time. After that, they will simply disappear and you will have to buy them again.
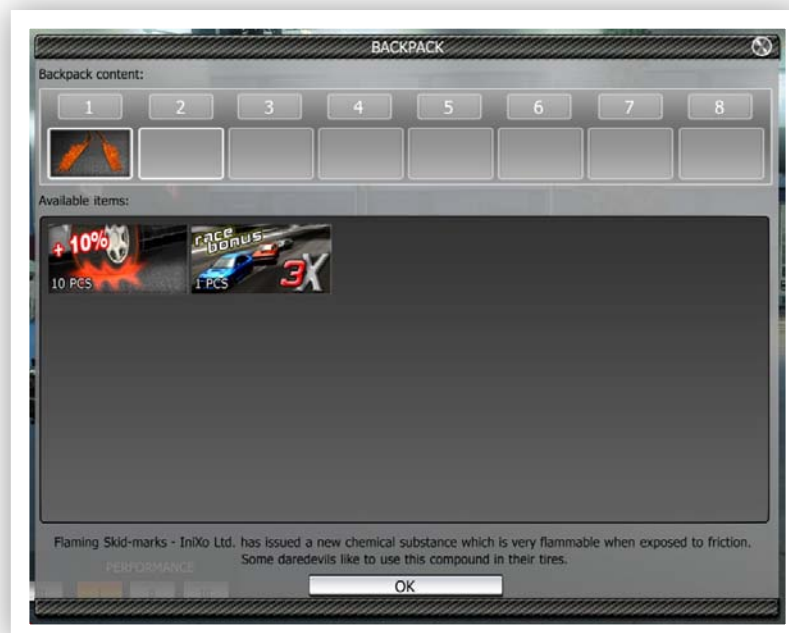
5.2. When Not to Use Backpack Items

Backpack items present a special way to tune your car or increase your points. This is why quite a lot of room hosts do not allow them in the name of fair and equal chance racing. If you see a room clearly labeled "no BP" or something similar, the host does not

want Backpacks to be used by players. In these cases it is only fair to agree to these terms when you enter the room, and empty your Backpack.

On events with written rules this may just happen as well. Before you enter an event, read the rules in the community forums and look for Backpack terms.

Now that you have bought parts for your car in the shop, it is time to install them and tune your ride! The next part will explain tuning in detail.

Part F:

Tuning Your Car

This chapter explains the world of tuning in Project Torque. While tuning is not as difficult here as it is in "true" simulators (like *Live for Speed* and *GTR 2*), it does have quite some influence on the performance of your car. Whether you tune or not is a questions of personal taste, and the benefits and drawbacks will be outlined later.

1. Visual Tuning

Before we get down to the technical side of performance tuning, the easy thing comes first: visual tuning lets you modify the looks of your car – something that is never really useful, but it is cool to show off a unique-looking car in online races where other players can actually see it. Visual tuning starts with modified body parts, encompasses new colors and stickers (vinyls), and finishes with details such as rims and a new steering wheel.

1.1. Body Parts

Installing new body parts is very straightforward as you can instantly see the effect: when you select a part in the shop, it will be installed automatically and the car model will be outfitted with the new look. Simply choose the "Body" tab in the "Parts" category to browse body parts.
You can change the front and rear bumpers, add sideskirts or chassis decoration, install a new hood, add a wing and switch mufflers. Many of these subcategories offer several alternatives for every part, so you can swap around different hoods or bumpers until you have found the right one. To remove an attached part, simply deselect it.

Although body parts like wings might have an aerodynamic effect on the car in reality, this is not the case in Project Torque. They are purely visual modifications.

1.2. Paint Jobs

If you were unsatisfied with the selection of colors available when you bought your car, a new paint job will be your cup of tea. Simply click the "Styling" tab to see the "Colors" subcategory, which offers many color tones for any car. To view your car with a new color, just select it and the car model will update instantly. Deselect it to return to stock color or switch to another color to see that.

If a new paintjob is not enough "street racer"-like for you, the next three categories will further enhance the look of your car and give it a unique touch.

1.3. Vinyl Types

Vinyls are stickers attached to the body of a car to display a shape or other graphic on it. They can be interchanged without having to repaint the car. If you want graphics on your car, there are three types of vinyls to choose from, each with its own subcategory on the "Styling" tab.

- Soft Vinyls: graphics covering only a smaller portion of the car, leaving much of the paintjob to be seen.
- (Medium) Vinyls: covering up to 50% of the car, more intense colors.
- Extreme Vinyls: can cover the whole body of the car and completely change its look. Aggressive and beautiful graphics.

Which type of vinyl you choose is really up to your taste. Not every vinyl type may be available for your car; for example, the Phoenix only supports soft vinyls.
Like with body parts and paintjobs, selecting a vinyl will show you what it looks like on your car. You will see rather low texture detail here if you put a vinyl on a car you do not own, i.e. one you intend to buy with vinyls attached. To maximize the looks in the preview, set the "Opponent Vehicle Detail" to "HIGH" in the graphics settings (see *Part B, 4.6. Video Settings*). However, remember that vinyls will

always have a lower resolution on cars you do not own! Only if you put a vinyl on your own car, you will see its full detail.

1.4. Rims, Interior, Steering Wheels and Race Numbers

After your car has seen a nice facelift, you can finish it up with custom rims on the wheels. Standard rims may look cool, but the reflective 20" chrome rims of a certain Italian manufacturer from a certain TV show may just be cooler for a street racer! In fact, depending on the style of the car, the offered rims will vary – the Phoenix can be upgraded with small five-spoke rims which will not look all that different from the factory rims, but a Corolla, RX-7 or a Corvette feature some nice alternatives. The same goes for the interior and custom steering wheels: you can change those if you wish and if the car supports it, but it's really a matter of taste. Race numbers will not give you any advantage in a race as well, but if your car features "1" or your personal lucky number on the body, why not?

2. Balancing Kits

Balancing is the first step into performance tuning territory. While it does not involve the swapping or upgrading of parts, it is the first thing you can do to increase the handling of your car and make it respond better to your driving style. Balancing is not difficult to understand, but it is important to know which balancing kit does what.

2.1. What Balancing Kits Do

Project Torque offers five balancing kits: aerodynamics, grip, brake, acceleration and 4WD. Except for acceleration, these kits change the balance of the car either to the front or to the rear, which means that the weight (handling balance) or the power (power balance) will be transferred forward or backward when you drive or brake, depending on the kit you used to balance you car. You can combine several kits to achieve different results. The goal is to get the car under better control and prevent it from excessive oversteer or understeer in corners, and to distribute power where you need it the most.
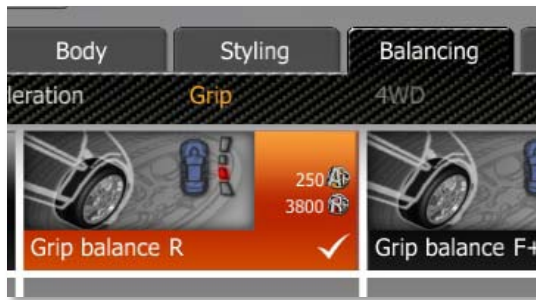
I will take my class 1 Toyota Corolla GT-S as a running example to clarify this. When the car is stock, its handling is incredibly hard to master. It oversteers a lot in corners and drives very unstable, prone to spinning the rear out whenever you hit the gas too much upon exiting a corner. Once the car goes sideways, it is also hard to get it back under control – countersteering will often have no effect at first, only to be followed by a rapid spin toward the other direction and total loss of grip.

Handling upgrades will improve grip and control a lot, but balancing is the key to this car. The extreme oversteer and the low grip on stock tires can be improved without changing parts, and even after you installed new tires, balancing will still have a lot of influence. It can be the first and the last thing to make your car's handling perfect.

You can balance your car slightly or heavily to the front (F and F+ kits) or to the rear (R and R+ kits). If you want less oversteer, increase the grip to the rear. If you want to counter understeer, balance the car to the front. For power balancing, forward means more power to the front wheels and backward increases power to the rear wheels.

2.2. Aerodynamics Balance

This balancing kit uses the aerodynamic properties of your car to shift the weight. Since aerodynamics only become effective from a certain speed upward, the weight will only shift when you drive moderately fast or faster, not if you take a hairpin corner at 30 km/h. This is the perfect balancing kit to give your car more control in high-speed corners or on bumpy roads where the tires lose grip easily. Unlike full grip balancing, the car will increasingly shift the weight the faster you go, but it will not have an effect when you corner slowly. If you are satisfied with slow cornering performance but you have trouble at high speeds, aerodynamics balancing is the right choice.

This was the second balancer I installed on my Corolla after balancing the brakes. I found that cornering at high speeds led to understeer, so I wanted to increase the grip to the front tires to keep the car more firmly on the track. However, as the Corolla oversteers heavily when braking or accelerating out of slow corners, I did not want it to oversteer even more at low speeds. Aerodynamics only have an effect at higher speeds and thus the "Aerodynamics F" balancer was perfect.

2.3. Grip Balance

This is the full and permanent weight transfer balancer that will affect the car whether you are cornering, driving straight, or standing still. If you have trouble with oversteer at all times, be it slow or fast corners and low or high speeds, installing "Grip R" or "Grip R+" will help, and vice versa for understeer.

This was the first thing I tried with the Corolla: the oversteer gave me headaches, so I tested "Grip R" to see whether it would become more controlled in corners. At first it seemed as if the car had stopped oversteering completely and totally understeered instead, which was not my intention – the Corolla is a drift car and should have some oversteer at least, especially in faster corners, so I removed the balancer again.
Just recently I had a long practice session with the car, trying to increase my drifting skills and overall control. I found that it was very difficult to corner normally even at low speeds; the car was simply twitchy and never felt right. Not even the brake and aero balancers and the handling upgrades had corrected this, so I gave the "Grip R" balancer another try. With more experience driving the Corolla, I tested it on several tracks and found that it was in fact quite possible to drift it well, even though the oversteer was dramatically reduced. The car takes a bit more "effort" to drift (it starts drifting by itself without balancers), but once it goes sideways, I can keep it under control much better than before and the dreaded 180s it used to do so often were greatly decreased. With the "Grip R" balancer, the Corolla feels a lot more secure to drive, giving you a feeling of control as it only drifts when you want it to, and grip cornering is also much easier.

This is a good example of the "first and last" rule I explained above – the handling simply did not feel right even with upgrades and tuning as long as the balancer was not installed. An example for front balancing would be my Phoenix which had a tendency to understeer at stock. "Grip F+" greatly reduced this behavior and made cornering a lot faster.

2.4. Brake Balance

Balancing the brakes is another very good measure to give your car more control in corners. While braking should not be done when driving through a corner (as it will induce oversteer), it is helpful to brake toward the corner entrance so that you can minimize braking time and maybe even give the car a little "bump" to let it turn into the direction of the curve. However, if the car is usually understeering, it will not respond to this braking style very well and instead slide off the road. If it oversteers a lot, like the Corolla, braking into the corner entrance and steering just a bit will probably make it go sideways. In these cases, balancing the brakes differently will help shift the weight less or more to the front, so that you get the perfect response from the car.

When driving the Corolla on stock balancing, I noticed that just a little jolt at the brakes induced a drift that was hard to control. Braking into the corner entrance and steering was practically impossible (this is what makes the license tests so difficult for beginners). To minimize this oversensitivity, I installed "Brake R+" which shifted the weight much less to the front when braking, leaving the rear tires some grip at the corner entrance. On other cars, R+ could have resulted in the car completely understeering (as the front tires lose grip now and the rear tires keep the car straight), but for the Corolla it was perfect – controlled braking drifts were now much easier to do as the car was still oversteering into the corner, but a little countersteering and throttle bursts kept it from spinning out.

2.5. Acceleration Balance

This is the first power balancing kit, although it works differently from the other, the 4WD kit – while 4WD distributes power to the front or the rear wheels, acceleration balance defines whether you want more top speed at the cost of acceleration or more acceleration with less maximum speed. Therefore, the F(+) and R(+) indicators have been changed to A(+) and T(+) here, with A meaning acceleration and T meaning top speed. If you feel that your car could be faster from the starting grid, increase the acceleration. You get maximum results with A+, but top speed will suffer a bit. Contrary to that, if you feel that your car has enough reserves from 0 to 100 km/h but lacks top speed, buy a T or T+ balancer. Acceleration will be a little less, but you will get a few more km/h out of your machine.

2.6. 4WD Balance

The second power balancer, 4WD defines whether you want the engine power transferred more to the front wheels or the rear wheels. Because four-wheel-driven cars usually have equal power on all wheels at stock, oversteering them on purpose to let them drift in corners is difficult. If you want to drift with a 4WD car, balancing power to the real wheels with R+ will give you some of that rear wheel drive that drift cars usually have, so that giving it all the gas you can will make the car go sideways in a corner. If drifting is not your style of driving, but you feel that handling the car on rough surfaces or keeping it under control is difficult, balancing the power to the front wheels will make your ride behave similar to a front-wheel-driven car, giving you more control and less oversteer.

As a bottom line on balancing kits, what is left to say is that every car and every driver are different, and balancing your car should be done from your own preferences. Asking the community for hints on balancing the Corolla gave me three to four different opinions, always with the last sentence being something like, "try it for yourself and find out what you want".

When your car handles fine on stock balancing, there is no need to change that! But if you have trouble controlling it and you believe that your driving is not the only issue, tackle the corners with different approaches – try to drift, try to grip, run corners slow and fast, brake hard and softly, accelerate early out of a corner and do anything you can to find out where the weak point of the handling is. In the Corolla example, I ended up with "Brake R+", "Grip R" and "Aerodynamics F", coming from the fact that braking into corners resulted in uncontrollable drifts while steering through large curves at high speeds resulted in understeer. I wanted to get less oversteer when braking and more front tire grip when driving fast, so I chose these balancers. Together with some handling upgrades which we will discuss next, the Corolla is now much easier to handle for my driving style – but it may be different for you, and you should try and find out for yourself!

3. Handling Upgrades

After you have balanced your car, the next step in performance tuning are handling upgrades. Project Torque features two different ways of performance tuning: body kits and single upgrades, such as suspension and tires. Every upgrade comes in stages, starting with stage 1 for a noticeable but small effect and going up to stage 5 for the greatest effect. Every stage requires that the previous stages be installed first, so you can only install stage 3 upgrades after you have bought stage 2 and stage 1 before that.

3.1. Upgrade Kits vs. Single Handling Upgrades

The body upgrade kits lighten the weight of the car, increasing both handling and power. With body kits you can tune everything at the same time, starting from top speed and horsepower to braking distance and handling. For most cars these kits are quite expensive though, and they do not offer the customization options that you get when you upgrade single parts. For example, a stage 1 body kit may increase the handling percentage by 4%, but stage 1 tires and suspension will do that as well. If you feel that you need more grip, you could then upgrade to stage 2 tires and leave the suspension alone for now, giving you a different result than a stage 2 body kit upgrade while costing a lot less. The same goes for power tuning as you will see in a moment.

3.2. Level Limits

Like every upgrade found in the "Upgrades" category in the shop, handling upgrades require you to be at a certain level to buy and install them. Stage 1 parts can often be

installed at the level required by the car itself, but the higher you go, the tougher the level requirement will be. The Corolla needs players to be at level 19 to install the final stage 4 upgrades, but stage 2 and stage 3 can be purchased at medium levels between 10 and 15.

Naturally higher class cars that often require a high level to be bought will also demand a much greater level to upgrade.

3.3. Upgrading the Tires

Probably the most straightforward and most effective upgrade on all cars are new tires. Some cars have better stock tires than others and higher stage tire upgrades naturally mean more grip, so if you want to drift with a car that has good grip at stock, it may or may not be a good idea to upgrade the tires depending on your driving style.

I found that my Corolla had too little grip to actually do controlled drifting, much less grip cornering. I upgraded the tires to stage 2 and noticed a large difference: the car was easier to catch after the rear broke out, control in wide curves at high speeds was also a lot better. And still, since I had balanced the car to oversteer in corners, the additional grip from the new tires never held it back from drifting – it made it much less painful instead! Stage 4 tires then finally gave my Corolla the best grip it could get and it was still driftable, just a lot more controlled.

3.4. Upgrading the Brakes

What would a power-tuned car be without good brakes? To quickly come down from the high speeds, you need the shortest possible braking distance. In this case, higher stages will lower the braking distance number in the specs, which is a good thing as every meter that you need less to brake mean one more meter to drive at full speed.

Make sure that you choose the best possible brakes. When the Corolla has no body kits installed, stage 2 brakes have the greatest effect while stage 3 and 4 actually make the braking distance longer again. Only with body kits the higher stage brakes will become effective. This may be different for every car, so watch the distance meter when changing brakes.

3.5. Upgrading the Suspension

Installing a better suspension on your car will increase stability when cornering as the weight will shift less to the side. Higher stage suspensions are more rigid and keep the car more stable on bumpy roads as well. Especially on cars with a soft stock suspension, like the Phoenix, starting with the suspension is a good way to improve handling quite a bit.

Handling upgrades are supposed to be simple: the higher the stage and the more upgrades you have (suspension, tires, body kits), the bigger the "handling upgrades" number will be on the specs of your car. However, "39%" does not necessarily mean that the handling has become better by almost 40%; it just reflects how many parts you have installed. Personally, I never noticed a huge difference between my suspension and tire upgrades versus the body kits – they both did a good job to increase handling, but when I install tires, I know exactly how they will affect the car whereas body kits just make it lighter in general. Since the Corolla is lightweight to begin with, the question is whether that is a good thing at all... and I feel that the body kits are simple allround solutions if you can afford them and do not want to mess with customization, nothing more. Of course, combining both will yield maximum results especially when it comes to power, so let's look at that now!

4. Performance Tuning

Now that balancing and handling are dealt with, you are ready to get down to true performance tweaking: the engine, transmission, electronics and brakes will be focused here to increase power, top speed and acceleration, and decrease braking distance. Again, body upgrade kits can be used to boost every aspect of your car's power, and again the single upgrades offer more customization.

4.1. Upgrade Kits vs. Single Performance Upgrades

When you install a body kit, the lighter weight will not only improve handling, but also gain more horsepower and shorten the braking distance. If you want to tune only one aspect of your car's performance, like top speed, resorting to single upgrades will be a much more effective and cost-efficient idea, though.

4.2. Level Limits

As mentioned with the handling upgrades, specific levels are required to install different stages. In terms of power this means that you will only notice a slight increase at first, starting with maybe 2 HP and 1 km/h more top speed. The higher the stage, the more effective the upgrades will be, but they will require a higher level to be installed.

4.3. Upgrading the Engine

If you want more power and more top speed, the first thing that comes to mind is boosting the engine. With an engine upgrade your car will have more horsepower and also gain a little more top speed, however the acceleration will be increased the most. Stage 1 only ups the specs a little, but stage 2 and 3 already give your car quite a boost in the range of its class. Of course a Toyota Corolla will not be boosted as much as a Mazda RX-7!

4.4. Upgrading the Transmission

Transmission upgrades change the gears to optimize shifting points. This can result in greater top speed as the highest gear leaves more room for the engine to throttle through. Acceleration will also be affected as the lower gears can kick the car from 0 to 100 a little faster.

4.5. Upgrading the ECU

If an engine upgrade does not give you enough power, the electronics controlling the engine can be changed as well, optimizing fuel flow and squeezing out quite a bit of horsepower even after the engine is at the highest stage. You can also start with the ECU or combine both engine and ECU upgrades on lower stages to see what gives you the greatest result.

Performance tuning can make your car a well-working racing machine. If it is done right on a good basis (i.e. if the car has enough reserves), you may even be able to compete with cars from higher classes. However, it is important to remember that no matter how simple tuning may seem in Project Torque, it has a different effect on every car. Experimenting is the key here. After all, what good is power without control?

5. Tuning – is it Necessary to Win?

As I said in the beginning of this chapter, whether you tune or not is a matter of your taste. It has benefits and drawbacks that highly depend on how you drive and what car you drive. If you are just a beginner and you think that you can gain extra speed out of your starter car, tuning it may sound interesting. If it is a class 5 car you are driving, increasing performance without upgrading the handling may result in loss of control, though – which does not mean that you cannot perfectly tune your RX-7 Spirit R or Lancer EVO! But you may just like the car the way it handles without any tuning and give it some new body parts instead for cool looks. With the following points I will try to explain how I think tuning should be approached. "Tuning" in this case refers to handling and performance, not visual upgrades.

5.1. When is Tuning Practical?

The number one thing to consider when you start tuning is: has the car enough reserves? As I mentioned earlier, an RX-7 will see greater improvements after an engine upgrade than a Corolla. At the same time, the RX-7 is a fast car with great grip in corners, yet it can still be drifted well, so there may be no need for tuning unless you want all the power you can get from it. But if tuning the engine of an RX-7 gives it much more power than tuning slow cars, a class 1 starter car like the Corus S3 cannot really see huge improvements with performance upgrades, right? Well, it is a matter of what you define by improvements.
In reality it will be hard to tune up a Golf GTI to compete with a Porsche 911 Carrera, so when you start tuning your Corus, keep in mind you will never compete with a Panama. But against other class 1 starter cars in a race, your tuned Corus may just be the fastest. That's why tuning can always give you an advantage over non-tuned cars, at least those in your class.

Drawbacks may appear when you have trouble controlling your power-tuned car, which is especially difficult in higher classes. Tuning is only practical when you can keep control of your car and when you do not plan to race it against two classes above yours.

5.2. Tuning to Your Driving Style

By now you have probably noticed that this guide often compares two distinct driving styles: grip driving and drifting. Grip means that you do everything to go as fast as you can without spinning out in corners, relying a lot on the grip of your tires and your suspension in corners. This driving style involves braking before steering into a corner, accelerating slowly out of one, and generally trying to drive as "clean" as possible.

Contrary to that, drifting is a style where you purposely make the car lose grip in corners, letting it go sideways and keeping it under control while sliding through the corner. You can gain more speed this way if you do it right, but your car must be balanced correctly to do this.

These two driving styles open up hundreds of personal styles with each driver finding their own. I tend to drive clean corners and drift only occasionally, especially in hairpins or rectangular corners on streets. This combination requires me to carefully balance my car to suit both styles: it has to oversteer a bit to initiate drifts, but I cannot easily control it in grip corners when it turns sideways too early.

Your style of driving is something to think about when you install balancing kits. If you want to grip race, oversteering should be minimized, but you do not want the car to slide out of corners because of understeer. When drifting more regularly, your car needs the oversteer to induce a drift, but how much you want of it depends on how you drift: e-brake drifting will result in much more oversteer than other styles, so balancing to your style is mandatory.

Whether you want tuning or not, the most important thing is to keep the car under control. The Eight-Six from *Initial D* was only able to win against FDs because the driver pushed the car beyond its limit while keeping it in perfect control. If you cannot run faster lap times with a tuned car, your driving needs the tuning instead.

Part G:

Becoming a Good Racer

This chapter is the conclusion to the actual guide to Project Torque, with Part H and the Appendices discussing more generic stuff. After you have made yourself familiar with all the features, racing modes and tuning opportunities by now, the only thing that is left is to take the knowledge and become the best racer of the Project Torque network! However, there are still a few hints and topics to discuss that will help you become a good racer. Any questions you might have after reading the guide up to this point, about how to drive correctly, how to drift, which drive-train to choose, how to set up your input method… will be answered here. After that, you are on your own!

1. Input Methods

Early in this guide I described how to set up the controls (see *Part B, 4.4. Control Settings*), but you might still be wondering which input method is the right one and how to best set it up. There is actually a simple answer to the first one: analog inputs are the best way to steer, throttle, and brake. Whether you use a steering wheel or another analog controller, like a joystick or analog gamepad, is a matter of your taste and your money. One might think that the only proper way to play a racing simulation is a steering wheel, but quite a few players get better lap times with gamepads, and some even with the keyboard although it is not analog at all! In the next few minutes, we will look at the various input methods and how to set them up for maximum results.

1.1. Digital vs. Analog Input

Digital is the way computers work: they only know two states, on and off – or 1 and 0 – and digital controllers have exactly this "range" to send commands to a game. When you push a keyboard key or press a button on your gamepad, it will send "on" to the game, and "off" when you release it. This is perfect for every function that requires no commands in between "on" and "off", such as the horn, the e-brake, the repairing or the nitro. But when it comes to steering, gas, brake and clutch, digital inputs are often not enough as they lack the fine states between 1 and 0. You either give it full gas or none – no fine control of the gas pedal in corners to keep the car drifting, burning wheels on every start, and no way to drive slowly at a steady pace. Steering is even more difficult: Project Torque will not fully steer into a direction the instant you press the button, but it will take a few moments to fully turn the wheels (which can be defined with "Steering Response"; see *Part B, 4.2. Advanced Game Options*). So now you need to steer in advance to take a corner at the right angle and let go of the button when you have reached it, which in turn will make the steering go back to zero – a difficult endeavor in a racing simulation.

Analog controls on the other hand will let you define the steering yourself. The instant you steer 45 degrees to the right, the car will turn 45 degrees to the right as well, and no further. You can hold at this point and let the car go in this angle, correcting it if necessary with small changes to the controller. Analog gas and brake mean much more control over how much you hit the pedals, resulting in smoother starts, constant cornering speeds, less tailspin and shorter braking distance. Analog controls are always preferable over digital ones when it comes to the actual driving of the car – leave the digital buttons or keys to the functions that are designed for them. Of course there will always be players who claim that they run fine with their keyboard or digital gamepad, and if they really do good lap times, let them. It is still a matter of personal preference, but if you are unsure which input method to use, go for analog input first. If you cannot

afford a steering wheel, there are cheap but useful analog gamepads available everywhere today.

1.2. Game Helpers

The Game Helpers in the advanced game options can help you stabilize your driving. They do not have much of an effect when you use a good steering wheel, but even if you have analog sticks on your gamepad, their range will be a lot smaller and driving may become twitchy. "Steering Help (Steering Wheel)" will smoothen out your rapid steering movements and try to keep the car under control. The higher you set the slider, the more assistance the game gives you. Do not worry, steering help will not steer for you or take the controls away from you; it is merely a helping hand that makes driving with small analog sticks a tad easier. This is one thing you could try when you feel that controlling even a starter car is difficult.

The same goes for "Steering Help (Keyboard)" which assists you when steering with digital inputs (keyboards as well as gamepads). Also, "Steering Response" can be defined further down in the advanced game options, where low values will make the game turn the wheels much slower than higher values. If you have to resort to digital steering input, you can balance out how fast you want the steering in the game to respond after you pressed the button or key.

GAME HELPERS
STEERING HELP (STEERING WHEEL)   0%
STEERING HELP (KEYBOARD)   50%
THROTTLE HELP   0%
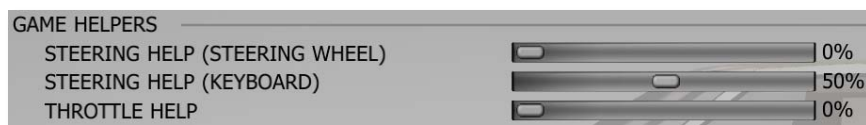
"Throttle Help" is an assistance for both analog and digital inputs. It will act like a kind of ESP or traction control, preventing the wheels from spinning through when you hit the gas too much. This can be especially useful when you throttle digitally as it will provide some smoothing to the full-on gas you give the car.

1.3. Mouse and Keyboard

Driving with the keyboard can be tricky. Although I am a convinced fan of steering wheels and analog inputs in general, I found myself reverting to keyboard control for one particular Driving Challenge where I had to steer so much that my 900 degree wheel gave me hand-aches. The one thing you need to get used to with Project Torque is the steering response. I set it to the highest value so that the game would only take about half a second to fully steer after I pressed the key. Still, you need to anticipate when to press the key so that your steering will neither be too late nor too early. Holding the steering angle can then only be achieved by letting the key go and pressing again in fast repetitive motion, like "steering bursts".

Braking should be done the same way: burst the brake key so that you will not slam the pedal down to the metal. It will only lock your wheels and make the car lose grip, letting it slide off the road.

If you want to circumvent the digital steering and have no analog inputs, you still have your mouse. Steering with it is possible in Project Torque and it provides some form of fine control over how much you steer. Move the mouse and the wheels will move with it, stop the mouse and they will stop too. The only trouble is getting the mouse back to the steering center as you have no true reference point, and moving a car with one hand on a mouse pad feels a little awkward too. It can be the first step however, and combined with the keyboard to throttle and brake, it is still better than nothing.

As I said, there are a few players who achieve great results with the keyboard. How they do it is beyond me, though!

1.4. Gamepads With Analog Joysticks

A far better solution which also combines digital and analog inputs is an analog gamepad. Like I mentioned earlier, these gamepads are readily available in most electronic entertainment stores; Amazon even sells some for 10 dollars a piece. The quality of the gamepad varies with its price, but as long as it features two analog sticks, a D-pad , four buttons on the top and a few shoulder buttons, you can map all the necessary functions in Project Torque to it. In this case it would be best to configure one stick to steer and the other to throttle and brake, kind of like an R/C car's remote control.

With the analog sticks, you can feather the steering, throttle and brake by pushing the sticks from a little to half to fully in one direction. It takes some getting used to at first, but once you have completed a few laps and your brain has accepted that one hand controls the steering and the other has the throttle and brake, you will quickly start to improve. While analog sticks on gamepads still have a small range and cannot be used with extreme precision, they are much faster than a wheel. You can steer left and right in quick succession which may make some situations easier to handle for you than for a wheel driver. However, wheel drivers can feel what the car does if they have a force feedback wheel and react to it better. With a gamepad that vibrates, you know that something is going on, but you cannot tell what it is and the car will spin out before you know it. So the number one reason to go from gamepads to steering wheels is that they usually offer force feedback, apart from the much finer control and the unbeatable realistic feel.

1.5. Steering Wheels

Now this is the way to play a racing game! Steering wheels and pedals come in various configurations – from the standard 180 degree wheel, which turns 90 degrees to the left and to the right, to the 900 degree force feedback racing wheel with a shifting knob and paddles, all kinds of buttons, and grip rubber all over the wheel. Pedals can be different too, from small ones with little range to realistically sized, sport-designed fine control gas, brake and clutch pads. The Logitech G25 even has a separate unit with an H-shifter that emulates a real car's six-way gearbox! Many of these wheels, and many of them quite inexpensive already, offer force feedback which will give you realistic motions from the wheel as it responds to the forces applied to the car in-game. If you go for a wheel, I strongly suggest one with force feedback for Project Torque! It will make things much easier and just so much cooler! You can feel what the car is doing on the track, notice every bump in the road, work against g-force in corners and countersteer at the right time when drifting. This separates a steering wheel from analog gamepads.

Usually, cheaper wheels come with a range of 180 degrees which is not truly realistic for street car racing (as a street car can often turn 900 degrees), but you will quickly get used to it, even more so if you have never driven a real car before. The 90 degrees you can turn the wheel to either side still give you lots of room for fine corrections, and if the wheel has good sensitivity, you will have no trouble controlling your car in any situation. A 900 degree wheel (which is usually a little more expensive) has the benefit that it can be set to any range, so even if you do not want to work as much as in a real car, you can expand the range from 180 degrees to say 360, which gives you GT and Formula 1 steering range. Finally, using the full 900 degrees means a lot of steering work, but it is the most realistic way to drive cars in Project Torque and it can have quite an advantage as explained in the next paragraph.

Steering wheels for computer games are fascinating controllers. They can give you the illusion that you really drive a car, using your hands **and** feet, and even making manual shifting highly enjoyable! The fine control you get from a wheel is simply incomparable to the small range of analog sticks on gamepads, and the force feedback (if it is good) makes driving all the more fun and realistic.

1.6. Steering Range Clearly Explained

"Wheel Steering Range" is the long slider you find in the advanced game options (see *Part B, 4.2. Advanced Game Options*). Setting up the steering range can cause some confusion as evidenced by many community forum users asking for assistance. Most players are not exactly sure what the setting really does other than "define steering sensitivity", but that is only half of the truth.

Many racing games define steering sensitivity in a chain from the input to the game, i.e. the sensitivity value controls how much you have to move the steering wheel or analog stick to steer x degrees in the game. This is then made a constant throughout the game, meaning that if you set up sensitivity too low, you will have trouble getting around tight and slow corners since you will have a hard time fully steering in one direction. If you set sensitivity too high, handling the car can become a nuisance as keeping it straight and leaning into low-angle corners becomes shaky and difficult.
Some games have a way to compensate for this understeer or oversteer: the linearity slider. It defines how linear your steering input is transmitted to the game as it gets larger. If steering is fully linear, the first degree of input will be as sensitive in the game as the last, meaning that steering slightly is as shaky or slow as steering fully. If linearity is lowered, the in-game steering is increased in a logarithmic fashion as you steer more in a

direction, meaning that slightly steering will result in lower sensitivity in the game than fully steering, which translates as a much greater steering angle. So, linearity is a good way to fine-tune the handling of a racing game, but it still remains constant – you have to be careful how far you steer or the car will suddenly steer too sharply and plunge out.

The steering range slider in Project Torque is a wholly different bag. Firstly, it does not control sensitivity as I just described it, but it rather turns the chain around and tells the game how far to steer at all, meaning that if you set this lower than 900 degrees, the car will simply not fully steer into a direction, but stop way before reaching the realistic 450 degree angle. Of course this also reduces the sensitivity since you now virtually steer less when moving your wheel or stick fully into a direction, and since Project Torque has linear steering, this means that slightly steering becomes easier as well. The drawback is that with lower total angle, getting around hairpins is difficult. This is why Project Torque has a neat feature built in: a kind of dynamic logarithm that increases the total steering angle when you slow down the car.

It works like this: when you drive above approximately 100 km/h and steer, the range of the in-game steering is what you set up on the steering range slider. So if you have 270 degrees set up, steering fully to the right at 100 km/h or greater will give you 135 degrees to the right, and steering less than this (to make slight corrections or drive through low-angle curves) will also be a lot less sensitive than it would be at 900 degrees. But you still cannot get around tight corners, right? Well, since such corners always require slower speeds than 100 km/h, Project Torque will increase the steering range when you go below that speed. At about 55 km/h, it will always be double of what you set up (540 degrees if you have 270 set) and below that it will radically move up to 900 degrees when you go below 10 km/h. So if you corner at 40 km/h, you can get around tight turns with a steering range of 180 or even 90 degrees! At the same time you will have no trouble keeping the car on track in broader corners or on straights. It is all dynamic!

To better show you how much the steering range is decreased from 900 degrees toward your setting when you speed up, let me show you this chart. It displays the steering angle the game assigns to the car with every 10 km/h more, from 10 to 100, at 90 degrees user-defined range, which is reached at 100 km/h. Remember: this diagram shows the steering angle in one direction, so it starts at 450 and ends at 45 degrees!

Virtual steering range in relation to speed at 90 degrees
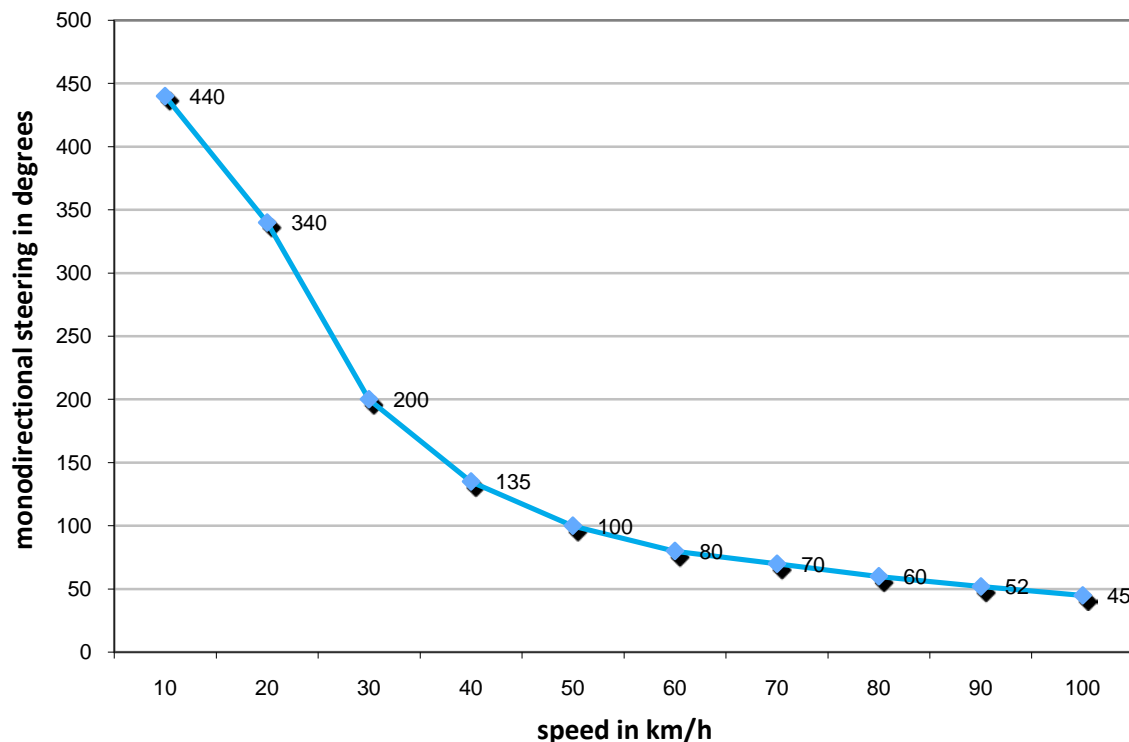
You can test this behavior by setting your steering range to 90 degrees and fully steering in a direction, then slowly accelerating as you drive circles. At 10 km/h, although set to 90, the game will steer almost 450 degrees (900 degrees steering range) and it will suddenly start flattening out the steering when you increase speed to 20, 30 and 40. At about 55, the car should steer double of what you set: 90 degrees (180 degrees steering range) and from there it goes down much slower as you reach the 100 km/h mark, where you end up with 45 degrees (90 degrees range) – if you can keep the car from spinning out!

It works the same with every other steering range you set up: at 180 degrees, which is what many players with 180 degree wheels will use, the car will steer 90 degrees at 100 km/h and 180 at 55 km/h, again gradually going up to 900 degrees as you slow down more. This behavior is always active for any steering range except 900, where you fully steer the 450 degrees in a direction regardless of your speed – which is what you want if you have a 900 degree wheel and use it like one.

I have found that you can get the best handling from the car if you set the steering range close to or exactly as the range of your steering wheel. If you use an analog stick or digital input, experiment a bit since it will feel different with every type of gamepad, and it will be a matter of taste really for keyboard drivers. In summary, I would recommend the following settings:

90 degrees – not very useful unless you steer digitally or with tight sticks.

180 degrees – useful for 180 degree wheels since the car will steer as quickly as you move the wheel, and no slower or quicker. Gives good sensitivity when steering slightly. Can be pumped up to 200 or 220 degrees to give some more range on faster corners, but be careful not to overdo it.

270 degrees – works well if you own a 900 degree wheel and set it to 270 degrees in the Windows control panel. I used to do this on my Logitech Driving Force Pro to have a big steering range with fast handling – 900 degrees was too much work for me. Can be pumped up to 360 to steer 180 degrees in fast corners if you want to drift slightly.

900 degrees – this is what you want when you use your 900 degree wheel with its full range. In fact I am experimenting with this at the moment, as it is the most controlled and realistic way of driving and drifting. Naturally you can fully steer regardless of your speed at this setting.

Everything between 270 and 900 could be used if you have a 900 degree wheel and set it to something lower, but greater than 270 (like 540 or 720). As I said, from personal experience I feel that matching the steering range of the game to the range of your input method (preferably a wheel) gives you the best handling. If you use an analog stick or keyboard to steer and you feel the car is twitchy, lower the steering range – and remember that you can still corner at low speed!

2. General Guidelines

If Project Torque is your first contact with a racing simulation, some basic racing concepts may not be familiar to you. It is a good thing to go on the track and find your own rhythm, but for reference and because it is good to know the theory, here are some of the most important racing guidelines.

2.1. The Racing Line

The racing line is the way you drive when you are not on a public street, but racing on a course for maximum speed. You do not keep on one side of the road and you drive through corners using the full width the road provides to you. Learning the racing line is very easy; keeping to it at high speeds is what racers have to master.

A corner on a racetrack has three points: the entrance, the apex and the exit. The apex is the focus of the racing line. Rather than sticking to the inner side of the corner while driving through it, you want to minimize the steering and maximize your cornering speed, which is done by "hitting" only the apex and driving from and to the outer side of the corner at the entrance and exit. The theory is simple: if you come from the outer side and slow down, you can steer into the corner and toward the inner side. But because you

now have some room to go straight for the apex, you can speed up or at least keep your current speed for a few moments. After hitting the apex, the straight line you are going in will plunge you out of the corner toward the outer side, which is where you steer again to face the exit direction. You exit the corner on the outer side with maximum speed.
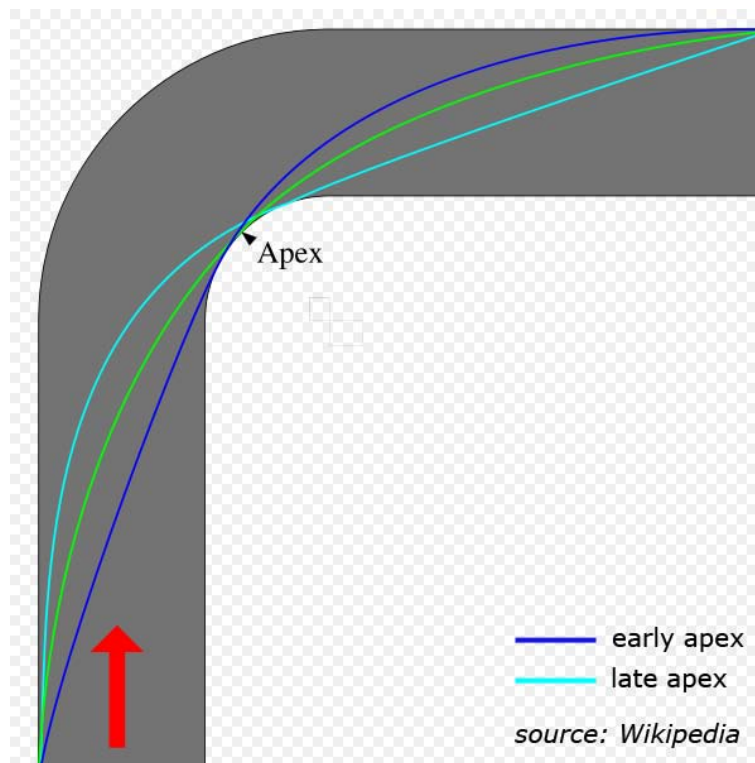
The apex-focused line can be especially useful in sharp corners and chicanes where the apex is often a true "edge" rather than a curve. On broad corners, it is harder to find the ideal racing line since you cannot go as straight for the apex as in sharp turns, and constant steering is required while you try to find the best spot to hit the inner side and ease up the steering to go out again. In chicanes and s-curves, the racing line is often a straight diagonal way through both corners with minimal steering at the entrance of the first and the exit of the last corner.

The racing line also involves the right points to brake, steer, and accelerate, which are the basics of cornering.

2.2. The Basics of Cornering

When approaching a corner, get to its outer side and estimate how sharp the corner actually is. If it appears broad, you will not need to slow down as much as on a hairpin or a sharp 90 degree turn. Finding the right speed to brake down to is a matter of course knowledge and takes a few practice laps until you have memorized the course.

After slowing down into the corner entrance, you stop braking. If you are still too fast to steer without sliding off the road and you must brake into the corner, ease off the brakes and feather them so that your wheels will not lock, or otherwise your car will not steer at all. This is also why braking should be done **before** entering the corner and not inside it, with the braking point being as late as possible. How late you can brake depends on the grip of your car, how good your brakes are, how broad the corner is and how good your racing line is. Braking should be done cautiously as slamming the pedal down can result in wheel lock unless the car features anti-lock brakes.

With the right cornering speed, you now steer toward the apex. This means that you do not follow the corner road steering constantly, but you steer a little more than necessary so that the car will go from the outer side to the inner side and toward the apex. Again, where the apex is can be different on every corner and finding that out requires a few scouting laps.

After you have steered toward the apex, ease off the steering and let the car go almost straight toward the inside. Since you opened up the steering angle, you can start giving it some gas again to speed up as you go through the corner. If you seem to drift to the outer side at this point, you are going too fast and need to step down again, perhaps applying some gentle braking. If you brake hard at this point, your car may start to oversteer, so act cautiously! If you cannot give the car more speed, simply try to keep the gas steady so you do not lose momentum until you have reached the apex.
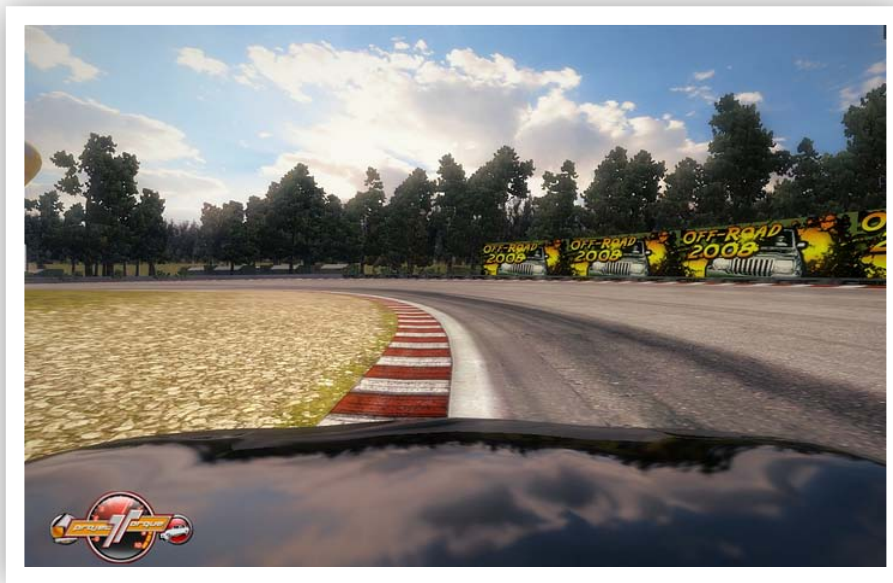
Exiting from the apex is the reverse of entering the corner: you still go almost in a straight line, perhaps after steering a little more around the apex if necessary. You slowly start to speed up as you prepare to exit the corner with maximum speed. As the straight line will take you away from the apex and toward the outer side again, you need to find the point at which to steer so that your car faces the straight after the corner exit. Once you hit the kerbs, give it all the gas you have got and leave the corner behind! However, if the kerbs are slippery or you touch grass, wet surfaces or other low-grip material with your outer wheels, going full throttle may result in a tailspin, so be careful and watch what your car is doing.

No matter what kind of corner you are facing, the procedure is always the same: come from the outside, brake, steer to the inside, hit the apex, speed up and go to the outer side again, steering into the straight. You may be faced with situations where you cannot fully go through this sequence, for example if the corner you just exited throws you on a path that does not set you up well for the corner right after it. In these situations, it is vital to make the best out of what you have and try to find the ideal line to go on.

2.3. Balancing Braking, Steering, Acceleration

When you brake into the corner entrance, brake as late as possible! You do not want to slow down your car only to find that you need to leave it rolling until you reach the corner. However, braking too late can result in a speed excess when you enter the corner, carrying your car off the track with understeer. Finding the right point to brake before a corner is the key, but you can balance out your braking to increase the chances of success.

A. Braking point
B. Turn in point
C. The geometric apex of the corner
D. Full throttle

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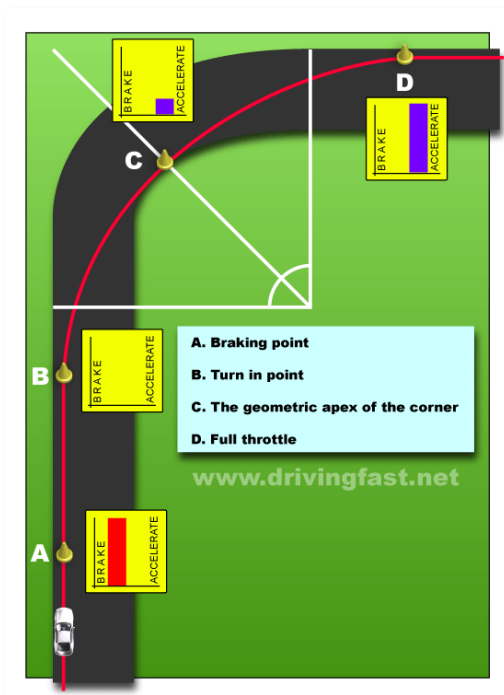
If you want to brake really late, you will have no other option except full-on braking: slam the pedal down as far as it can go to reduce speed real quick. The problem with this is that keeping the pedal down will most likely lock your wheels as they completely stop turning, losing grip with the road and making your car slide. To prevent this, feather the brakes a little even when you push them down far. Push hard to 100%, let go to 90%, push to 98%, let go to 95%, and so on. Simply try to emulate an anti-lock braking system (ABS), which works by automatically pushing and releasing the brakes in quick succession. Of course, if the car has ABS, you will not need to feather the brakes yourself as the system will do it for you.

However, most cars in Project Torque do not have ABS installed as it is seen as more of a drawback than a benefit in racing.

Your steering should neither be too far nor too little. You want to keep the steering movement and time low so that you will not lose too much speed. "Leaning" the car into the corner and then easing off the steering is the best way to reach the apex; however, depending on how broad the corner is, you cannot simply let the car go fully straight or it may not reach the apex at all. Slight steering to "direct" the car toward the inner side is always required.

You should try not to brake when steering. If you brake hard and you car has enough momentum, the tail will spin out very likely – your wheels suddenly lock and lose grip with the track, but because the car is moving in a circle, this motion will be transferred toward the rear (where grip is often lost first). Braking in a corner to get the car under control should be done with slight bursts from the brake pedal so that you will lose speed, but your wheels can hold the grip with the road.

Accelerating out of a corner is exactly the same thing. If you accelerate too early while still steering and your acceleration is too high, you will most likely lose control because the wheels that are driven by the engine spin through, losing grip and making your car move erratically. Naturally you want to accelerate as early as possible and it is perfectly fine to do so while exiting the corner, but keep in mind to feather it a bit. Instead of giving it full throttle, give it half at first until you have stopped steering; then you can put the pedal to the metal. Watch out for racetrack kerbs, grass or dirt at the corner exit – if your wheels touch the ground there, the acceleration might make them spin through again because of the lower grip.

2.4. Race Gear Shifting

If you have experience driving a real street car, you will most likely know how to shift "economically". This style of gear shifting employs low to medium engine torque, where you shift when the tachometer (the instrument showing the engine's revolutions per minute or RPM) shows a value that puts the least strain on the engine in the next gear. For example, if the engine can rev up to 8000 RPM but keep the car rolling comfortably at 3500, you will shift so that the next gear hits about 3500 RPM. This keeps the effective power output low and in turn reduces fuel consumption. The goal is to accelerate the car using its own momentum and letting the engine "support" the wheels rather than totally drive them.

The situation is completely different in racing. An engine that can rev up to 8000 RPM will be utilized with almost 8000 RPM since the goal is different this time – race drivers want the car to accelerate as fast as possible and let the engine do all the work. The higher the engine is revved, the more power it puts out and the wheels will be driven with a lot of rotational force, pushing the car forward. The high torque is used by shifting into the next gear only after letting the engine reach the red zone on the tachometer, providing much more RPM at the start of the next gear. The continuously high power output will consume a lot of fuel, but it makes the car go as fast as it can. Racing engines are often designed to be revved much higher to about 10,000 to 19,000 RPM, and they can tolerate the high torque much longer.

You can see the race shifting in Project Torque by choosing automatic transmission in the game options (see *Part B, 4.1. Game Options*). Once your car's engine reaches the red zone, the game will automatically clutch and shift into the next gear. The same goes for downshifting: the engine will not be allowed to reduce revolutions a lot, maybe coming

down to 3000 RPM before the automatic gearbox shifts down. This is done so that in case you need to quickly step on the gas after shifting down, the RPM will still be high enough to accelerate quickly.

However, the engine can purposely be revved down lower by a race driver to use the weight of the mechanics as a braking assistance. This is called "engine brake" and can slow down your car a bit just by letting off the gas, not even touching the brakes and not clutching either. As the engine's rotation speed decreases into a low range, it practically starts to drag on the wheels and the car's rolling momentum begins to "drive the engine" instead of the other way around. It is like adding a weight to the wheels that needs to be rotated by them, making them heavier and slowing them down more.

2.5. Heel-and-Toe Technique

An important technique for racing on manual transmission and with a manual clutch is the so-called "heel-and-toe" motion. The name refers to the heel (the rear end) and the toe (the ball) of your foot and how it is used on the brake and gas pedal. Heel-and-toe, or heel-toe for short, is a foot movement sequence that enables smooth downshifting when braking, and in a more simplified form it can increase power on upshifting.

Since the technique requires a few steps to learn and master and is of much more relevance for real-world racing, I will only briefly cover it here. It does have some importance when driving in Project Torque with a manual clutch, so the basic information is included here.

When you drive a car with manual transmission and a clutch pedal, you put your right foot on the gas and keep your left foot on the clutch at all times. When braking, you lift your right foot off the gas and step on the brake pedal. Many racing game players with steering wheels use a different approach when the wheel comes with only two pedals: they put the right foot on the gas and the left foot on the brake, and alternate them as needed. This is the way I drive with my Logitech Driving Force Pro which has no clutch pedal. I do not need my left foot to clutch, so I use it to brake. However, since braking and throttling at the same time is counterproductive and dangerous to the car mechanics, it does not really matter whether you use two feet or one to brake and throttle. When operating a clutch pedal, you must keep your left foot on it since you will press it whenever you change gears.

The problem when you downshift while braking is that you have your left foot on the clutch and your right foot on the brake – you cannot step on the gas if needed unless you let go of the brakes again. This will be important for the heel-toe technique in a moment.

Let's say you run in fourth gear at 180 km/h and you approach a corner that requires 80. You need to do two things at once: brake from 180 to 80 km/h, and shift down from fourth to second gear. On a normal street, you could first brake and then shift down

when you have reached the corner speed as engine RPM is of little matter. On the track, you want to slow down and speed up as fast as possible, so you hit the brakes hard and use the time to shift down. This involves the following steps:

- Put your right foot on the brake pedal and step on it.
- Wait until the engine RPM have lowered considerably to shift down.
- Clutch with your left foot and shift down.
- Let go of the clutch, release the brakes and step on the gas, OR
- let go of the clutch and keep braking toward the corner.

What will happen is, your car will experience a sudden jolt of force coming from the drive-train; either stalling for a moment or losing grip, maybe even spinning out of control. This happens because the RPM of the engine and the gears are not the same when you release the clutch. Essentially, this happens when you do the above sequence:

- You brake and the engine's RPM drop slowly as your car slows down.
- You clutch and shift down while the engine loses even more RPM.
- You let go of the clutch and the RPM from the lower gear hit the engine's RPM.
- The engine revs lower than the gears because you shifted down, resulting in the engine being pushed back up instantaneously.
- Your drive-train receives a jolt from the sudden force transfer.

The slowdown from the braking and the clutching afterwards reduced the engine's RPM quite a bit. As you shift down to a lower gear, the RPM ratio changes. If the gear is low enough to spin faster than the engine does at this point, it will suddenly drive the engine back up to more RPM when the gears lock. As this happens in an instant, the stress on the gears, the engine and the drive-train is very high, and the force transfer makes the car unstable. To prevent this, you need to match the engine's and the gears' RPM by applying some throttle before you let the clutch off. However, this would require you to step down from the brake pedal and onto the gas, resulting in time loss or even longer braking distance. It would also be very impractical if you want to brake a little longer after downshifting, in which case you could simply downshift later, but then you would lose too much torque.

You can use the heel-toe technique to match the RPM *while braking* before you let the clutch go, so that the engine and gears will be synchronized when the gears lock and the downshifting will be very smooth. While the mechanical stress is irrelevant in Project Torque, heel-toe will make your car more stable when downshifting and braking, and you will be faster on top.

The sequence with heel-toe would be like this:

- Put your right foot on the brake pedal and step on it.
- Wait until the engine RPM have lowered considerably to shift down.
- Clutch with your left foot and shift down.
- Move the right foot's heel toward the gas pedal while holding the brakes with the toes. You need to turn your foot slightly inwards to do this.
- "Blip" the throttle – slightly raise the RPM of the engine by hitting the gas for a moment with your heel.
- Let go of the clutch, release the brakes and fully step on the gas, OR
- let go of the clutch and keep braking toward the corner.

With your heel you are pressing the gas pedal slightly so that the engine will go back up a few hundred RPM. If you do it right, you will match the engine's RPM to the gears' RPM in the lower ratio. When you let the clutch go, they will be synchronized and the gear-lock will be smooth. All this happens while you are still braking, giving you instant acceleration from the smooth downshift and reducing time.

The purpose of the heel-toe technique, apart from reducing stress to the parts, is to maintain engine power. Like on the street, you could simply hold the clutch and wait until you are finished braking, then shift down to the desired gear (from fourth to second in our example) and let the clutch go as you throttle. But when you aim for the shortest possible braking distance and want to speed up immediately after shifting down, you may need to let the brakes go exactly as you release the clutch, and you do not have time to raise the engine's RPM other than with heel-toe. Using the technique, you can perfectly synchronize your braking and acceleration with the downshifting. You can accelerate instantly after braking without running the risk of losing control because the RPM do not match, or you can keep braking into a corner after downshifting without upsetting the car's balance.

While this technique is obviously not necessary in Project Torque unless you want full realism with your three-pedal steering wheel, it will help you if you clutch manually. With practice, you could time the motions on all three pedals perfectly and use your engine's full potential. This will not be necessary for automatic clutching or when you drive with automatic transmission.

There is a very good little video on YouTube showing the heel-and-toe motion.

3. Traction and Drifting

Whether you want to drift through corners or grip race, traction is the basic physical force you have to deal with. Also, different drive-trains respond differently to traction. This point will explain how traction works and how to use it properly.

3.1. Traction Explained

When you drive a car, the tires make contact with the road and move on it. Moving the tires on a surface results in the wheels turning, which drives the car forward. On a powered vehicle it works the other way around: the wheels are turning because of the engine driving them, so the tires are moving while they touch the road, going forward. So in short, traction is the term for the tire grip that makes your car move.

If you lose traction, the tires will have nothing to grip to and the wheels spin without moving any mass, resulting in uncontrolled over-spinning. This is why the wheels often spin through and make a so-called "burnout" when you give a powerful car full throttle from a standstill: the wheels spin too quickly for the tires to gain grip with the road, resulting in over-spinning. The tires are now skidding on the road, producing smoke and losing rubber. The mass of the car is simply too large to be moved so instantaneously, so it starts moving much slower than the wheels turn and the traction is lost. This is why slowly raising the gas from a standstill works much better – the wheels will have enough time to get the car moving, gradually speeding up and letting the tires grip to the road.

When drifting, you purposely want to make the tires lose traction. A drift is performed with the car sliding sideways through a corner, controlling the points at which traction is lost and regained. Obviously this requires skill and practice, and having the wrong drive-train will make drifting nearly impossible.

3.2. Oversteer and Understeer

Although I have used the terms oversteer and understeer a lot in this guide up to now, this section would be incomplete without a full explanation of them. When you drive a car through a corner at the right speed, all four wheels will grip to the road and you will have full traction, easily going around the corner. However, when you are a little bit too fast, the g-force will slightly push the car to the outer side, resulting in loss of traction. The car will not make it around the corner and slide off the road instead – the car understeers (it steers less than it should).

In contrast, when you go too slowly for the corner and you do not adjust your steering angle, the car will overly steer toward the inner side and finally hit the grass – the car oversteers (it steers more than it should).

In racing it often happens that you go a bit faster than you should. You want to make it through the corner faster than your opponent, so you give it more throttle and try to compensate with a steeper steering angle, relying on the grip of your front tires to keep the car in the corner. Two things may happen at this point: either the front tires lose grip and the rear wheels push the car straight ahead, resulting in understeer; or the grip on the front tires is stronger than on the rear (perhaps due to weight difference) and the rear tires lose traction, letting the tail spin out, which is oversteer. This can also happen when you go at the right speed but steer too much, effectively making the front wheels go sideways on the road. If they have enough grip at this point, they will force the rear wheels to give out and allow the car to follow the excessive steering, losing traction at the rear.
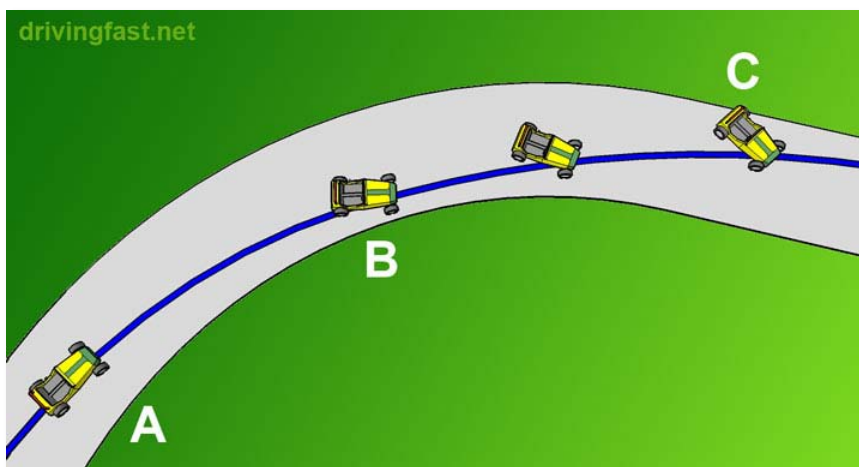
In a nutshell: understeer means that the car steers too little to make it through a corner and goes straight out. Oversteer means that it steers too much and leans into the corner a lot, which can result in a tailspin if not properly balanced. However, if you do balance it right, you can use the oversteer to go through corners faster. In its extreme form, this is drifting.

3.3. FWD, RWD and 4WD Traction Differences
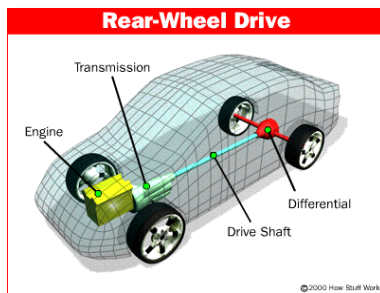
Cars come with different drive-trains: front wheel drive (FWD), rear wheel drive (RWD), and four wheel or all wheel drive (4WD or AWD). Cars can further be categorized by where the engine sits and where the drive-train is: FR for front engine and rear wheel drive, RR for rear engine and rear wheel drive, FF for front engine and front wheel drive, and some others like MR which stands for middle engine and rear wheel drive. Middle engine means that the engine sits behind the driver's seat (there is no backseat in such cars) and in front of the rear axle.

Car traction depends on two factors: where the drive-train is and where the weight is. If the engine is in the rear on an RWD car (RR), the drive-train gets the most weight as the heavy engine block sits directly on the rear wheels, pushing them down more. Loss of traction to the powered wheels is difficult here, but the front tires could lose some quite easily. On the other hand, an RWD car with the engine mounted in front (FR) has less weight and traction on the drive-train, but a lot more on the front tires, making it easier to keep the grip when steering.

In these examples, the RR car would tend to understeer (front tires lose traction) while the FR car would easily oversteer (rear tires lose traction). This is simply a matter of weight caused by the position of the engine. Overall, an RWD car has a tendency to oversteer and tailspin a lot more than an FWD or 4WD car. The reason is that the powered wheels are in the back and the steering happens at the front, so when you overpower the drive-train (as described in the burnout example), the rear tires lose grip while the front tires still have some – oversteer is induced. An FWD car where the steering wheels are powered is less prone to tailspin, but when you overpower the front wheels and they lose traction, you cannot steer anymore and the car understeers. A 4WD car usually has the best traction since all wheels are powered and there is no difference in wheel rotation speed between front and rear. But when you overpower a 4WD car, all wheels will lose traction at once and the car will slide uncontrollably; however, this total loss of grip can be used to do a four-wheel drift, which is easier to induce on a 4WD than on an RWD car.

3.4. Losing Grip and Regaining It

Traction can be lost because of various factors. One can be weight, another can be over-spinning of the powered wheels. However, when the car oversteers in a corner, it has a lot to do with the forces applied to the car and the tires. Knowing what made the car lose traction enables you to counteract it and regain grip.

In the first example where you go a bit too fast into a corner, you understeer. Counteracting this is easy: let off the gas or slightly brake for a moment to reduce speed. Braking will also shift the weight of the car to the front and give the tires a chance to regain grip with the road, so that you can properly steer through the corner again. Naturally braking in the corner and then correcting the mistake by steering a lot more takes time, so understeer should be avoided at all costs.

Oversteer can be controlled a lot better than understeer. When you steer a little too much in a corner and the rear tires give out, you will feel the car's tail going outwards. This can actually be a good thing unless it becomes excessive. Controlling the oversteer in this case involves countersteering: you steered a bit too much and induced the oversteer, so you need to steer less or invert your steering to get the grip back. First, try easing off the steering a little so that the angle of the car becomes broader. If this works, it will synchronize the front and the rear of the car to be in the same angle, giving the rear tires their grip back. However, if the tail has swung out so much that broadening the steering will not help, you need to steer into the opposite direction of the corner so that the front wheels will push the rear back onto the track. Of course, steering into the opposite direction can lead to total loss of control, so it is important to steer not too much and especially not too long, just so that the rear has a chance to recover itself.

If the oversteer was induced by other factors, like overpowering the rear wheel drive (letting the rear wheels spin through) or braking too hard into the corner (shifting weight to the front), you may need to correct the oversteer by more than just countersteering. In case you overpowered the drive-train, the logical thing to do is reduce gas immediately. If the car's weight was shifted to the front too much due to braking, you need to shift it back to the rear for the tires to be pressed onto the road again, so let off the brakes and gently give it some gas for a moment. You need to be careful with it, though – hitting the gas too much will make the rear wheels lose traction completely instead of regaining it.

3.5. Controlled Drifting

Controlling a drift involves inducing and controlling excessive oversteer. While the normal oversteer coming from many high-powered cars can be used to lean into corners, drifting those cars requires that the car goes sideways. Upon entering a corner, you start oversteering by one of many methods known to drifters. You then try to keep the car in a stable oversteer while it slides through the corner sideways, preferably at high speed. Since the oversteer will keep the car firmly on the inside of the corner, you can go at it with higher speeds than the car could ever reach when grip racing. Controlling the oversteer is done by countersteering and applying throttle bursts.

The easiest drift you can do is the "side" or e-brake drift. It involves a few simple steps:

- Coming from the straight toward a corner, brake and shift down.
- Steer into the corner, step on the clutch, and pull the e-brake.
- As the car starts to oversteer, release the e-brake, let go of the clutch and countersteer.
- Gently burst the throttle throughout the corner to keep the oversteer stable. If you lose speed, the drift will be killed.
- When you face the exit straight, gently step on the gas to accelerate.
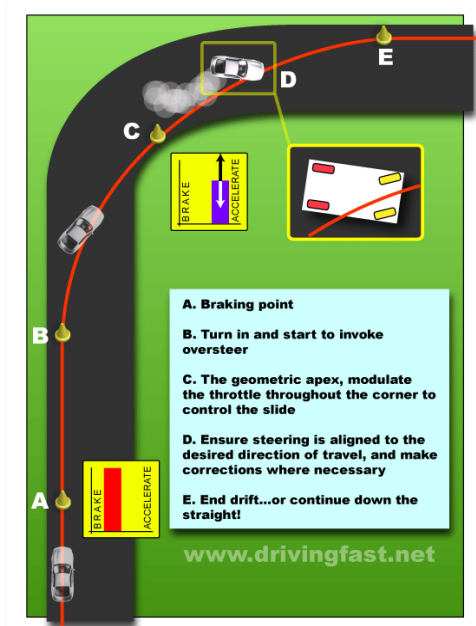
Obviously this is not as easy as it sounds. You need to find out when to pull the e-brake and how long to keep pulling; however, just under a second should be about right for most cars. Be careful how much throttle you apply when you burst it in the corner. Giving it too much will make your tail spin out, giving it too little can kill the drift. It also depends on how broad and how long the corner is; it is not necessary to burst the throttle when going around a 90 degree turn on a street.

Since you need to control the oversteer with throttle bursts, drifting usually works only with RWD cars. FWD will power your countersteering wheels which will result in loss of the drift; so to drift with an FWD car, you need to get

through the corner just with the momentum you have from the start. Drifting a 4WD is possible, but it requires different techniques that rely a lot on controlled traction loss from overpowering the throttle.

Other RWD drifting techniques include the Shift Lock and the Clutch Kick which require manual clutching, the Power Over where you step on the gas all the way near the exit of the corner, the braking drift where you use your normal brakes to initiate oversteering by shifting the weight, the "feint" or inertia drift which relies on the weight of your car and the g-force applied to it, and finally the Lift-Off where you let all four wheels slide and keep the car skidding through the corner.

Because drifting requires a lot of practice and knowledge about what the car is doing, I will not go in full detail about all the aspects of drifting in this guide. The best thing you can do is to take your RWD car to the track in Project Torque and start pulling the e-brake to see what happens. If you try to get your car sideways in a corner with the e-brake or by braking hard and shifting the weight to the front, you will quickly learn how your car reacts to the different approaches and how much braking, steering and throttle you need to apply to make it drift. Completing a drift with success and being faster on top is a great skill, though, and I am still far from mastering it, so I should be the last one giving advice about it.

There are a few good threads about drifting in the community forums which are listed in Appendix B. You can find a lot of information via Google and Wikipedia, too. To learn from the best, the "Drift King" Keiichi Tsuchiya, you can also go out and buy the Drift Bible from the Best Motoring DVD series. Some clips from this DVD can be found on YouTube as well; just search for "drift bible" there.

3.6. Making Your Car Easier to Control

If your car keeps understeering in corners even though you are going at the correct speed, or if you cannot make the car oversteer on purpose, you need to balance it out. As explained in *Part F, 2. Balancing Kits*, adding front balancers for grip, brake and aerodynamics will shift the weight more to the front depending on a few factors – grip balancing will permanently increase grip to the front, aerodynamics balancing will shift weight forward at higher speed and brake balancing shifts weight when you brake. Using the F or F+ balancers, you can increase your car's tendency to oversteer. I did this on my Phoenix because the car kept sliding off the track in corners. There was not enough grip on the front tires, so I increased it by adding "Grip F+". It was now much easier to lean the car into corners and drifting naturally became easier too. On the Corolla however, I wanted just a tad more oversteer at higher speeds, not when braking or going slowly, so I added "Aerodynamics F" there.

Balancing your car will make controlled oversteering easier to perform. At the same time, you can reduce extreme oversteer by adding rear balancers if necessary, which is what I did with "Grip R" on the Corolla. Of course upgrading the handling as explained in *Part F, 3. Handling Upgrades* will help as well.

4. A Word on Force Feedback

Force feedback is very useful in racing games, especially when you are racing with a steering wheel. Not only is it a cool effect, but it also lets you feel the forces applied to the car and makes it easier to judge what to do next. Setting up force feedback in Project Torque is simple, but finding the right balance and utilizing the effect requires a few things to know first.

4.1. How Force Feedback Works

A force feedback steering wheel features one or several motors that drive the wheel, just like the player drives it when steering. A microprocessor recognizes the force effects sent from a game to the wheel and moves the motor(s), applying "force" to the wheel as it turns into a direction with specific speed and power. Often this will not be the direction that the player wants to steer in, so he has to counter the effect by steering against the force applied by the motor. The illusion is that the player is turning the wheel against forces applied to the car going around a corner.

Turning the wheel is not all the motor(s) can do. To feel realistic, the wheel has to return other forces to the player as well, like vibration, inertia, and sudden jolts. All of this is done by complex motor movements processed by the electronics of the wheel and the software driver.

Force feedback is the ideal way to add depth to a racing game like Project Torque. You can not only see and hear what the car is doing, but feel it (in a limited fashion) and react to it more instinctively. This will give you better control of your car and improve your driving. Of course your steering wheel needs to be of good quality and the force feedback should be realistic, which is something you can find out from magazine or Internet reviews. If you plan to buy a force feedback wheel, try to get a good one – it will last longer and the fun you will have is greatly increased!

4.2. Which Forces of a Car Are Transferred to FFB?

I am not exactly sure whether this information is completely accurate and it may also depend on the game, the wheel model and the software driver. But in general, I think it is safe to say that the following physical forces can be simulated on a force feedback wheel:

- g-force; the power that draws objects to the opposite side of car travel
- inertia, the power of a moving mass and the time it takes to start/stop moving
- impact, the power of colliding with an object
- traction loss (felt when the wheel suddenly loses force)
- mechanical weight (it is harder to turn the wheel at all)
- vibration

G-force, inertia and traction loss are the most important effects. They allow you to notice when the car starts to oversteer, when it stops and turns into the other direction after countersteering, and when it loses grip at the rear. In every corner you will feel that you must hold the wheel firmly to prevent the car from going straight again, and the g-force will work against your hands and arms. When you drive over a bump in the road, the wheel will jolt a little, and it will jolt a lot harder when you crash. Finally, when you drive over rough terrain, vibration in your hands will let you feel the surface and mess up your fine control.

4.3. What Project Torque Does Different With FFB

Every racing game has its own force feedback effects. Some do it better and some do not, and every once in a while there is a game that really stands out for the way it utilizes the hardware. You can only do so much with one or two motors in a steering wheel casing, but some games really pull it off way better than others. Project Torque is such a game in many ways, but especially the overall feel of driving the car is right. Although the game is not a 100% true simulation, it always feels like one. This is because of the driving model and the parameters set for the physics engine – for example, the braking distance is much longer in Project Torque than in many other games, which feels awkward at first when you are new to the game. But it is realistic and comparable to real-world street cars. The same goes for the force feedback in steering wheels, it just feels right to drive a car with a wheel in Project Torque.

To be more specific, this realistic feeling starts off with the mechanical weight of the front wheels. When you stand still with the car and turn the wheel, you will feel that it takes a little power to do so. Once you start rolling, it will get easier to steer as you increase speed, just like in a real car. But regardless of the speed and the weight of the

wheels, which can be different for every car, you will have the constant impression that you steer with the front wheels, moving them when you turn the steering wheel and keeping the grip on them. You will know when grip is lost and you will feel the effect when it comes back. This strong impression does not appear in many other games; often you feel that the car just turns and you cannot really say what made it turn.

The good feeling when you drive the car will make you especially aware of irregularities. This helps when you attempt a controlled oversteer in a corner or go drifting. It will also help you balance your car better when something is not right. You can learn to use force feedback as an analytic tool to make your car tuning and your driving better. It is not only a nice effect, especially in a racing simulation!

4.4. How to Correctly Set Up Force Feedback

Depending on your wheel, the same force feedback setting in Project Torque may be hard or soft, so there is no definite guideline to follow when it comes to numbers. The game defaults to 50% for "Force Strength" and "Vibration Strength", which is pretty heavy on my Logitech Driving Force Pro (with the general setting in the software driver panel at 100%). But there is some general advice coming from personal experience here, and friends with more car driving experience have confirmed what I am about to tell you.

In general, the higher the steering range of your wheel, the greater the effort to turn it. When you set up your wheel to turn 900 degrees, be prepared to experience difficulties if you had the force feedback setting pretty high on 270 degrees. The strength will increase and on top of it, you will be required to turn the wheel a lot more which means extra work. Do not be hard on yourself thinking that this is the only way to correctly race with a force feedback wheel. Maximum output from the FFB engine can mean lots of detail when it comes to fine forces like bumps or vibration, but the things that matter will be incredibly hard to handle and generate unnecessary sweat drops on your forehead. Trust me, I often started racing with a pullover on and sat there in pants only after an hour because I started heating up from the steering work. Driving a race car may be difficult and heavy on the arms, but it is nearly impossible to turn a wheel 450 degrees with one hand when you have your force feedback settings at 100%.

Many of the cars in Project Torque feature powered steering in reality anyway, so steering those would not be so much of a job. If you feel that you have a lot of work to do when going through corners and it becomes uncomfortable, reduce "Force Strength" in the advanced game options. I have it set to only 10% at the moment (!) and I can feel

the car just fine. It is not comparable to what I felt before, when I was still racing with a setting of 270 degrees on the wheel. But the same feedback on 900 degrees was impractical to say the least. You cannot even smoothly change hands in a corner, the wheel will jolt back when you try it. If you like it stronger and your wheel's strength is comparable to mine, you might try up to 20%. The same goes for vibration: a high value will make you feel the road a lot, but it will throw you out of your rhythm too. Do not sacrifice car control for a nice effect just because you want it strong.

4.5. Which Bugs to Watch Out For

Since Project Torque is still not completely bug-free, there are bound to be some minor stones in the way and this time they hit the force feedback line. Actually the only real bug appears when you use a 900 degree wheel at a setting below 900, like 360. The game will recognize the setting just fine and steer accordingly, but the force feedback will hijack the wheel when you approach zero speed, turning it fully into one direction with strong emphasis. This also happens when you start from a standstill and only slightly touch the wheel: it suddenly steers into a direction on its own and the only way to get the car back straight and stop the excessive force on the wheel is to grab it and steer back while accelerating. The effect will subside when you reach a moderate speed like 10 or 20 km/h. It will never happen when you use your 900 degree wheel with a setting of 900 or even 180 (which is the standard compatibility mode).
Another glitch that does happen on every wheel is that force feedback will be completely turned off when you stop the car dead center. If you slow down and try to keep the wheel as straight as possible and then stop, the game will "unlock" the wheel from the force feedback line and you can freely turn it around – until you start driving again. Also, when you cross the finish line ending a race, the position of your wheel will be locked in and it will be hard to move it as it will simply go back. The effect will subside once the next race starts, when the force feedback effects are reset.

5. How to Race Fair and Fast

As a conclusion to the principal game guide, here are some final words about clean and fair racing as well as a few warnings. Keep these things in mind if you want to become a respected racer in Project Torque; you will make friends and enjoy great hours with them if you play fair!

5.1. General Etiquette in Online Racing

There are a few generic rules to online racing that should be followed in any game. Most of them are self-explanatory if you drive with some common sense.

- Do not ram other players intentionally. If you happen to ram someone by accident, let them know that it was a mistake.
- If others ram you, do not cuss at them and do not try to take vengeance by bumping them off the track. It may just have been a mistake as well.
- Keep the racing line. Competitive driving allows for blocking and defending your position, but you should not resort to unfair measures.
- If you spin out by accident, make sure that other cars coming your way will not run into yours. If your car blocks the road considerably, push the rescue button immediately.
- Do not mess up a race because you have a bad day. When you start racing, you are entering a competition with real people, so respect them.
- Do not bump other players off the track because you dislike their car. If you are the host, you can kick players before the race starts. If you are another player and you are disturbed by someone's car, leave the race and find a better one.
- Take it easy! If you fall back because of an accident, you can still use the time to practice and earn points.
- Do not spam the chat with unnecessary messages.
- If you lead the race and have a lot of room behind you, you might wait for the second-placed driver to arrive before you cross the finish line so that others will have a better chance of finishing in the time limit.

5.2. Keeping the Racing Line

This should be a "natural instinct" of every racer: if you want to be fast, keep to the racing line. This will become more difficult when you attempt to overtake somebody or you want to defend your position. Both require that you leave the racing line for a short time and do what is necessary to overtake or block your opponent from doing so. It is important to judge correctly when the time is right for a maneuver and which side to go on. If you miscalculate, you may end up crashing, spinning out or leaving the track. This may affect your opponent too, so be cautious to prevent such situations and try to minimize the risks.

5.3. Thunder Alley: Drafting

Drafting on an oval track with banked corners is dangerous. If you lose concentration, you might crash into the car you are drafting on. If this happens in a corner, both cars may spin out and off the track. When you overtake your opponent after drafting, you should make sure that you go back to the racing line just after giving him some space to fall back so that you will not hit the other car. Also, try to estimate the moves that your opponent might make when you attempt to overtake him. If you go to the inside of the

corner, he might try and block you there and you would quickly have to go to the outside to prevent a crash.

Drafting and overtaking on Thunder Alley is always risky. You have to concentrate a lot and react to slightest movements of your own or your opponent's car. At the high speeds you are going, even a little bump to the rear of another player may end the race.

5.4. Popular Exploits

In its current version, Project Torque is still a victim to exploits. An exploit is a bug or design flaw that can be utilized by players to gain an unfair advantage over others, or simply to let the game function in a way it was not designed.
There used to be quite a few exploits in Project Torque in earlier versions, but many of them have either been removed or made harder to execute. Still, a few exploits remain and keep annoying fair players, so it is helpful to know what to watch out for.

Short room countdown: Room hosts may start the race by toggling ready even when other players are not ready. The countdown that reminds all other players to get ready has recently been shortened to five seconds to prevent sudden car changes (car change exploit). However, hosts may now use the short time span to make quick changes to their car or the track and start the race just after players came in. In such instances, players will not have enough time to react to a track change, for example by switching their car setup kit, or to see that the host switched his car and gained an unfair advantage. The race will start so quickly that players often find themselves cheated by the host on the track.

Thunder Alley car restriction: In the current version, there is a way to play Thunder Alley with other cars. While this is more of a bug than a real exploit, players seen racing with non-TA cars on Thunder Alley may be warned or banned.

Thunder Alley cars in other modes: Thunder Alley cars may also be raced in other game modes or race types where they do not belong. Players using this exploit will be warned or banned as well as they could use the cars' extreme speed to claim world track records and gain prizes.

5.5. Using the Replay Function as Evidence

If you have driven a race where something happened that you found offensive, you have two ways of reporting it. For chat harassment, take screenshots as the chat happens – simply press PrintScreen on your keyboard and there will be JPEG files in the "screenshots" subfolder of the Project Torque installation location. To report driving behavior, you need to insert a replay tape and save the last race on it. This will result in an RPL file appearing in the "save\replay" subfolder.

You can submit your replays and screenshots to GameMasters (GMs). They are official community supervisors authorized by Aeria Games to take action in such cases. There is an Abuse Reporting System (ARS) set up here and you can view information on it in this forum thread. Upload your evidence files to the ARS and enter your in-game nickname, your account name and the in-game nickname of the offender. The GMs will review all submitted evidence as long as it is valid (not containing modified material or stuff that has nothing to do with the game). Offenders found guilty will then be warned, temporarily banned and finally thrown out of the game for repeated abusive behavior.

This concludes the Project Torque game guide, which I hope has helped you learn everything there is to know about this great racing game! If you are a new player and just starting out, this guide may have given you a lot of information for your limited experience, so feel free to come back and research specific points – naturally the same goes for more experienced players. The guide will be updated when players like you suggest useful things to be added or changed. Of course I will try to keep the information in this document as accurate and up-to-date as possible, so there will be a new version of the guide with every bigger update to Project Torque.

On to the support chapter!

Part H:

Support

When you play Project Torque, there will undoubtedly be questions this guide cannot answer directly. You can take these questions to the community forums or to Aeria Games if you require support. This chapter will introduce the people who are there for you when you have questions or problems.

1. International Versions of Project Torque

It is important to note that Project Torque is not the only name this game runs under. While it is the original and leading version in terms of development, it stems from another game called Level R that was actually marketed for Japan and Asia (hence the many Japanese cars, parts and tracks). As Japanese reception failed, Aeria Games took over and funded the project, publishing it in North America under the name Project Torque where it gained success. This version has been opened internationally and can be played from most places in the world. However, the Japanese Level R still exists and there is also another Level-R (note the hyphen) for Germany. All three games differ in content, community and worldwide access.

1.1. Project Torque vs. Level R

Project Torque is the version that is now considered "original". It receives all the updates first, has the full functionality introduced by the developers, and is accessible worldwide. It runs directly under Aeria Games and you get worldwide support from them. Because Aeria Games is expanding, the support structure will become better over time.

The two Level R games on the other hand are somewhat limited. They are not open to international access (the German version is only available to Germany, Austria and Switzerland), they offer less and different content (with a few different cars and less tracks), and they get different updates after Project Torque has already received them. These games run under different publishers (Gamigo for Germany) and not even Aeria Points are called AP anymore (GP for Germany). The community is centered around each game, which means that you can find German community forums at the German website of Level R.

It is obvious that should you be playing Level R and not Project Torque, a few things in this guide do not apply to your game and you will not be able to seek support in the places I am about to list.

2. Aeria Games Customer Support

Aeria offers customer support to all players. Whether you have a technical problem with a game, questions about Aeria Points and transactions, or account problems, you can contact customer support using this contact form.

You will then get a ticket number for your request by e-mail, which you can use to reply and discuss your request in further e-mails or forum topics. The forums also have a support category in the "Aeria Games" forum for this.

2.1. What Aeria Does for You

Aeria will support you with technical problems you might have with one of their games, including Project Torque. They will answer questions about billing, transactions and problems with Aeria Points (for example if you have not received your AP within 24 hours after transaction completion). Aeria will also look into account problems such as lost game progress and login troubles.

2.2. What Aeria Does Not Do for You

Aeria will not support you with any game not published by them. They will ignore offensive requests clearly not stating a problem and interpret this as spam. If you cannot explain your problem clearly, this will make support difficult for Aeria. Also, do not post requests to ban other players and do not send replays or screenshots to them – this is what the Abuse Reporting System is for (see *Part G, 5.5. Using the Replay Function as Evidence*).

Aeria will not refund AP you have mistakenly spent on wrong game items. It is your responsibility to be aware of what you spend your AP on. If you bought the wrong car, that is your own fault as you could have test driven it before buying. However, if AP are missing from your account and you did not buy anything, your account may have been hacked and this is a valid reason to submit a support request!

2.3. How Aeria Maintains Project Torque

From time to time, Aeria will announce things on the Project Torque website that should be read and considered. You can see these newsposts in the game launcher: simply click on a headline to open your browser and read the page. If Aeria is announcing an event of some kind, for example a limited sale of cars or server maintenance, there will be a countdown toward the start or the end of the event. This way you will know when server maintenance takes place and be prepared that you cannot play Project Torque at this time. You will also be aware when things are on sale or when other events happen so that you get a chance to participate. Events that are over will say "event closed" where the countdown used to be.

Server maintenance is important to keep MMO games running free of problems, so there will be maintenance every once in a while. Usually it is done around midnight, Central

European Time, but when there is a severe bug in the system, servers may be down unexpectedly. In these cases, visit the community forums and look for an announcement in the Project Torque forum.

3. Project Torque Community Support

Project Torque has a helpful and mostly friendly community. The long-time players and professionals will be happy to help you out when you have questions. Of course there are dozens of FAQs and tutorials in the community forums, so asking the same question over and over that has already been answered in one of those topics is counterproductive and will earn you a "go there" link at best. I recommend reading these topics as they cover some details not presented in this guide (to prevent the information from being outdated quickly). Look at *Appendix B* for a list of forum topics.

3.1. GameSages and GameMasters

GameSages (GSs) and GameMasters (GMs) are officially empowered players and forum moderators working for Aeria Games. They perform tasks such as giving feedback from the community to the developers, announcing and hosting events, discussing game updates, speaking for the developers and for Aeria, and generally helping players out. They will take requests and respond to tickets in the forums, watch what happens in the games and take action against abusive behavior. They are an initiate by players for players.

You can take your problem to a GS or GM anytime by sending them a message via the forums or posting a thread asking for support.

3.2. International Community Forums

The Aeria Games community forums can be found at forums.aeriagames.com. They offer a forum for every game published and maintained by Aeria, with child forums categorizing every game's aspects. For Project Torque, these child forums include:

Events & Contests – announcing in-game and general events
General Discussion – the forum to discuss anything that does not fit anywhere
Guilds (Race Teams) – discussing events that are undertaken by teams
Live Events (Race Leagues) – discussing events that are currently running
Gameplay Help – the place to ask questions about all game aspects
Support – the forum open to suggestions, technical and other problems
Creative – a place to post fan-made stuff

The forums are open to every registered player. Simply log in with your username and your password, and you will be able to read topics and post messages.

3.3. In-Game Community Support

The community will also help you when you have problems in the game. Opening the "System" tab in the chat and asking for help will probably trigger a response from someone (unless you are asking stuff that is covered in this guide). You can open a private chat with specific players to further discuss your or their problem. Furthermore, try to make friends and talk to them when they are in the game. Not only will they race with you, but they might also be of assistance when you ask.

3.4. Racing in Community: Voice Chat, Organized Races, Leagues

When you have made friends or you are racing with some locals, you might resort to methods of communication that surpass the in-game chat. Many players use TeamSpeak and several other clients to voice-chat while they play. This can be a lot of fun since you can talk freely while driving and comment on your opponent's actions much more directly. Also, meeting friends in the forums and organizing races there may result in a full event where many players participate, creating a true community race and further broadening your circle of game friends.

If you want to enter a racing league or an event hosted by someone you do not know yet, simply ask them in the forums after finding out whether they accept other players. Of course your skills should be good enough for such a thing (unless it is a newbie league or event).

The community in Project Torque is what makes the game work. When you are racing, the community members are your opponents. When you need help, other players will be there to ask. Discussing and suggesting stuff in the forums can be a lot of fun and help you understand the game a lot better. In fact, lots of the information in this guide comes from there!

The community is also what this guide was written for. If you are reading this document and playing Project Torque, you have become a full-fledged community member and you can use this to your advantage as well as everyone else's. If you think you have a cool idea (like I did when I started this guide), let them know.

Play it fair, and good racing! Enjoy Project Torque!

Appendices

Appendix A

1. Default Keyboard Commands and Hotkeys

1.1. General Car and Game Controls

Accelerate – up arrow key

Brake – down arrow key

Turn left – left arrow key

Turn right – right arrow key

Handbrake – left CTRL key

Shift up – A

Shift down – Z (Y on QWERTZ keyboards)

Clutch – C

Horn – H

Mirror – M

Rescue – R

Repair car – Backspace

Look back – Tab

Look left – Q

Look right – W

Next music track – "." (dot)

Previous music track – "," (comma)

Music volume up – Number Pad "+" key

Music volume down – Number Pad "-" key

Nitro – N

Open Backpack (in menu screens) – I

1.2. Default Chat Keys

Toggle chat – Y (Z on QWERTZ keyboards)

Next chat tab – "]" (closed rectangular bracket)

Previous chat tab – "[" (open rectangular bracket)

Next channel – L

Previous channel – K

Activate Input – Enter or Number Pad Enter

Toggle chat panel – P

1.3. Chat Voice Macros

"Hello" – 1
"I'm sorry" – 2
"Do not hit me" – 3
Cheer – 4

1.4. Camera Views

Cockpit (driver's view) – F1
Hood – F2
Roof – F3
Cockpit (center view) – F4
Third person (far) – F5
Third person (near) – F6
Trackside camera – F7
Car close-up – F8

2. Glossary of Terms Used in Project Torque

4WD: Four wheel drive, also called all wheel drive (AWD). The drive-train of a car that powers all four wheels from the engine.

Aeria Points (AP): In-game currency that can be used to buy items. AP need to be purchased with real money through a variety of transaction methods.

Apex: The sharpest inside point of a corner. If the corner is circularly shaped, the apex is usually the exact middle inside point.

AWD: See "4WD".

Backpack: A virtual space that you can put Backpack items in. These items can be used in a race and must be purchased in the shop.

Backpack item: An item available for sale in the shop that can be put in the Backpack and used in a race. Such items include nitro boosts, braking or grip enhancers, and point doublers.

Bumper: The front and rear end of a car's body, often made of plastic and for decorative and aerodynamic purposes. Can be switched by buying parts in the shop.

Class: Cars in Project Torque are categorized in classes from 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest and 6 the highest. Classes can feature street, offroad, race and drift cars indicated by the class sticker that you see next to a car.

Drag: A type of racing where competitors start from zero speed and try to reach the finish line at the end of a long straight, usually a quarter mile. Acceleration and shifting technique determine the outcome.

Drifting: A form of cornering that relies on the controlled loss of traction. The car slides through the corner sideways, shortening braking and steering distance and enabling higher speeds.

E-brake: The emergency brake or handbrake, normally used to lock down your car after stopping so that it will not roll away on its own. Can be used to drift.

Experience Points (XP): Points you get for racing in Project Torque, reflecting your experience with the game. Increasing your XP allows you to level up, unlocking items and race modes.

FWD: Front wheel drive, the drive-train of a car that is powered by the engine on the front wheels, "pulling" the car forward.

Game Helpers: Steering and throttle assistance that can be configured in the advanced game options.

Gift: Shop items can be gifted to another player by spending AP on them and entering the name of the receiving player upon purchase via the gift button.

Green Key: A special Mission Bonus Key that can be won in Explorer or in events, enabling you to accomplish any unlocked mission without driving it.

Grip: The force between a car's tires and the road. Grip transforms the rotating motion of the wheels into the translating motion of the road and the car.

Grip racing: A form of cornering that requires traction. The driver tries to make the car go as fast as possible without losing control by finding the ideal line to go through the corner.

Mission Bonus Key: An item which can be used to unlock and play a mission such as a Career race, a Task or a Driving Challenge. Red keys are awarded for every 7000 XP you gain while yellow keys come with every 75 miles you have driven.

Nitro: Short term for nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas. Injected into the engine of a car to produce more power by increasing the output of the combustion process. Activating a nitro will greatly enhance acceleration for a short period of time, but also heavily wear down the engine.

Race Points (RP): Points you get for racing in Project Torque that allow you to buy items in the shop. Alternative in-game currency to AP.

Racing line: The ideal way to drive through a corner at maximum possible speed. The racing line follows several basic rules, but every driver can find their own line with experience.

Rating: A numerical value that is calculated by how well a player drives. Only rating-enabled rooms will affect your rating. The effect is marginal, but it can change your rating over time.

Replay medium: An item that can be purchased in the shop to save up to 20 replays of races to your hard drive.

RWD: Rear wheel drive, the drive-train of a car that is powered by the engine on the rear wheels, "pushing" the car forward.

Skeleton Key: A special Mission Bonus Key that can be bought in the shop or won in events, enabling you to unlock and accomplish any mission without driving it.

Sponsor Girl: A time-limited shop item that will double your points or increase your acceleration.

Steering range: The range at which a steering wheel can be turned to the left and right, measured in degrees. The total range is double of what the wheel can be turned to one side, meaning that 180 degrees of range result in 90 degrees to either side.

Touge: Originally meaning "pass" in Japanese, the word refers to mountain passes which are common in the Japanese landscape. Touge racing is a form of street racing along a mountain pass, often a duel between two drivers, either uphill or downhill. It often involves drifting to get around the tight hairpin corners and also presents the danger of falling down cliff-side.

Traction: The grip between a car's tires and the road. Better traction equals better control, traction loss means that the car becomes partially or completely uncontrollable.

Vinyl: A sticker that can be put on the body of a car to enhance it with graphics or more complex color schemes without having to repaint the body.

Appendix B

1. The Music of Project Torque

Project Torque features an electronic and a rock soundtrack marked as "Headbanger". The three Hungarian rock bands ManGod Inc, Benzin and Wackor allowed instrumental versions of their songs to be included in the game, with ManGod Inc. contributing the largest part of the music while the other two bands added three songs each, making for a total of 17 rock songs. Some of these can be found with vocals on the bands' websites:

www.mangod.hu
www.benzinrock.com
www.wackor.hu

There is also a Project Torque Headbanger Soundtrack album available in MP3 format, which I made myself and linked in the forums. Currently it can be found here.

2. Pop Culture References

There are quite a few references to other popular media in Project Torque, most notably to *Initial D*, a manga and anime series about Japanese mountain racing (touge) that has gained a lot of fans worldwide. The protagonist Takumi Fujiwara drives an AE86 Toyota Trueno Sprinter, the Japanese version of the Toyota Corolla GT-S included in Project Torque.

Some references to Initial D:

- The AE86 Toyota Corolla GT-S. It is called "Eight-Six" in the series which explains why some players call it that way in the game.
- The Mazda RX-7 Spirit R Type A (FD). An earlier version of the RX-7 FD is driven in the series by Keisuke Takahashi. The drift version of this car in Project Torque is almost a replica of the FD from the anime.
- The Mazda RX-7 GT Limited (FC). This car is driven in the series by Ryosuke Takahashi.
- The Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX. Earlier versions of this car, called "Lan EVO" in the anime, are driven by several characters in later seasons.

- The Kawana K-660. This fantasy car was inspired by the Suzuki Cappuccino which is a very small car that falls in a category called "K" in Japan. A Cappuccino is driven by one of Project D's many opponents in season four of the anime.
- The Tanzawa map. This is a Japanese mountain pass that looks a lot like what you see in the series, although it is much shorter in the game and cannot be driven during nighttime.
- The sign saying "Furukawa Tofu Restaurant" on the Tokyo map. Takumi Fujiwara's father runs a tofu shop in the anime. The kanji for "Fujiwara Tofu Shop" are printed on the right side of the Eight-Six.

Project Torque also refers to a lot of racing culture in general: NASCAR™ with Thunder Alley, American street racing with the San Francisco Marina map and with the Drag race type, and show drifting with the Drift mode. Also, Wangan Race is modeled after a real-world road strip in Tokyo, the Bayshore Route on Shuto Expressway, called Wangan in Japanese (source). It is used for high-speed street races through traffic. Another manga and anime series called Wangan Midnight debates this track.

3. Popular Community Forum Topics

This is a small list of the most popular and helpful topics from the community forums. While the PT Information Desk links a few more topics that I have not put in here, these threads are outdated by now and should be read with that fact in mind.

The PT Information Desk – a collection of links to FAQs and tutorials
The Players FAQ – a list of frequently asked questions
Official FAQ – the official FAQ by Aeria Games
Racing Etiquette – a more detailed etiquette for Project Torque
How to Race Thunder Alley Correctly – basically the etiquette for TA races
Abuse Reporting System – explaining the ARS
XP Needed to Reach Each Level – the cumulative XP list
Drifting 101 – a tutorial and a collection of links about drifting
Drift vs. Grip Discussion – an interesting discussion about which technique is faster
Drift School – Dampire's drifting lessons with video links (see recent pages)